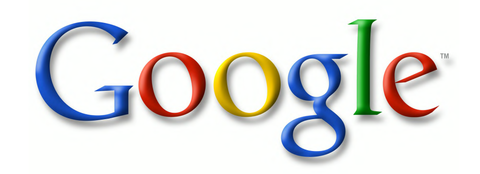
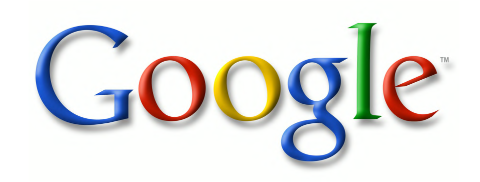




ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATUR

BY J. PARMENTIER

PARIS

LIBRAIRIE C. KLINCKSIECK

1. English [illegible]

A SHORT HISTORY

OF THE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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SECONDE SÉRIE

I

A SHORT HISTORY

OF THE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

FOR THE USE OF FRENCH STUDENTS

BY

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PARIS

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PREFACE

When two years ago I undertook the composition of *A Short History of the English Language and Literature*, I thought only of my pupils at the Faculty of Poitiers. My aim was to provide them with a summary of my lectures which could easily be understood, and to induce them, by making them familiar with the English language, to read the authors in the original. My sketch was scarcely designed for printing; it would rather have been lithographed. In the meantime some modifications have been introduced into the programmes of the examinations for

Lorsque je m'engageais, il y a deux ans, dans la composition d'une Petite Histoire de la langue et de la littérature anglaises, *je ne songeais qu'à mes élèves à la Faculté de Poitiers. Je voulais mettre à leur disposition, en anglais facile à comprendre, le résumé de mes leçons, et les amener, en les familiarisant avec la langue, à lire les auteurs dans le texte. Mon abrégé n'était peut-être pas même destiné à l'impression; il pouvait n'être qu'autographié. Depuis ce temps, des modifications ont été faites aux programmes des examens pour les langues vivantes; l'enseignement de* ces langues

the living languages, the teaching of which is going to be extended. This being the case, I thought it would be better to enable a larger number of students to avail themselves of my labours. These may be, first the candidates for the professorship of the English language, since the history of literature has become obligatory on all; secondly the pupils of both sexes of all boarding-schools where a good course of study is gone through. The most distinguished of them will not content themselves with knowing the English language; they will, on the contrary, be desirous of knowing something also of the literature. They will possibly be enticed by the perusal of a treatise which they can un-

est à la veille de recevoir une extension nouvelle. Dans ces circonstances, j'ai pensé qu'un plus grand nombre d'étudiants pourraient profiter de mon travail. Ce seraient d'abord les aspirants à l'enseignement de l'anglais, puisque l'histoire de la littérature est devenue une épreuve obligatoire pour tous. Ce seraient ensuite les élèves de l'un et de l'autre sexe des maisons d'éducation où les études sont fortement organisées; les plus distingués ne voudront pas se contenter de savoir la langue anglaise, ils voudront savoir aussi un peu de littérature. Ils se laisseront allécher par la lecture d'un traité qu'ils comprendront sans le secours du dictionnaire. Enhardis dans leurs premiers pas, comme des enfants à qui on apprend à

derstand without the help of a dictionary. Emboldened by their first steps, like infants who are taught to walk without stumbling, they will not fail to go further, to enter upon more difficult books, an to push on until they meet with the authors whose names and works they have learnt.

marcher sans les laisser tomber, ils voudront aller plus loin, aborder des livres moins faciles, et pousser jusqu'aux auteurs dont on leur aura dit les noms et les œuvres.

It is not only in simplicity of language that this manual differs from the manuals written in England; it bears a French character. Instead of details uninteresting for us, it contains many comparisons between the literature of France and that of England. There has always been a literary relation between these countries, and in the influence exercised by one upon the other, there are points of discussion, which are

Ce n'est pas seulement par la simplicité de la langue que ce manuel diffère des manuels écrits en Angleterre; c'est encore par son caractère français. A la place de mille détails qui ne peuvent avoir d'intérêt pour nous, il contient de nombreux rapprochements entre les littératures de la France et de l'Angleterre. Il y a toujours eu des rapports littéraires entre les deux pays, et dans l'influence exercée par l'un sur l'au-

calculated to extend the view of inquisitive students.

This book is a novelty in France; it would not be in Germany, where the study of a foreign literature in German would seem as strange as travelling abroad without any knowledge of the languages of the countries travelled through : how would it be possible for any one to become acquainted with the customs, manners and life of those countries, when incapable of communicating with their inhabitants? To say nothing of the literatures of other countries, I have on my table the six following treatises concerning those of France and England :

tre, il y a bien des points dignes d'examen, et propres à étendre les vues des esprits curieux.

Ce livre est une nouveauté en France ; il n'en serait point en Allemagne. Là on comparerait ceux qui étudieraient une littérature étrangère en la dépouillant de sa langue, à des hommes qui voyageraient dans des pays étrangers avec la seule connaissance de leur propre langue : comment prétendraient-ils, à leur retour, avoir appris à connaître ces pays, leurs coutumes, leurs mœurs, leur vie, en un mot, s'ils avaient été incapables de communiquer avec leurs habitants? Ainsi, pour ne parler que des littératures de France et d'Angleterre, j'ai sur ma table les six traités suivants:

1o *Premiers éléments de littérature française*, par Louis Grangier ; chez Brockhaus, Leipzig.

2° *Histoire abrégée et élémentaire de la littérature française*, par Louis Grangier; chez Brockhaus, Leipzig.

3° *Manuel d'histoire de la littérature française*, par Ricard; chez Calve, Prague.

4° *A Brief History of the English Language and Literature*, by K. Kaiser. (Leipzig, W. Bufleb.)

5° *History of the English Literature*, by J. Siedler. (Leipzig, A. Krüger.)

6° *A Short Sketch of English Literature*, by E. Mann. (Bonn, Weber.)

It is not easy to write simply and to be correct. I have done my best to succeed in both. On the whole, I have not used expressions which could not be justified by one or several instances taken from the English writers. I have sometimes cast my thoughts into moulds supplied by them, or even taken whole sentences from their works. By way of extra precaution, I have applied to an English corrector, Mr. Ch. Albert Lean, Master at the King Edward's High School, Birmingham, who has

En prétendant écrire en anglais très simple, le plus difficile était de rester correct; j'y ai mis tous mes soins. En général, j'ai évité les expressions et les tournures pour lesquelles je ne pouvais m'autoriser d'un ou de plusieurs exemples tirés des écrivains anglais. J'ai quelquefois jeté ma pensée dans le moule que ces écrivains me fournissaient; souvent même je leur ai pris des phrases entières. Pour ne négliger aucune précaution, j'ai eu recours à un correcteur anglais, M. Ch. Albert Lean, Professeur à The King

been patient enough to read the whole book, and has endeavoured not to pass over anything that would be considered bad English. I beg him to accept my best thanks for his kindness.

Edward's High School, Birmingham. Ce jeune savant a eu la patience de relire mon livre, et d'en écarter avec soin tout ce qui lui paraissait de mauvais anglais. Qu'il daigne agréer ici, pour son extrême obligeance, mes plus sincères remerciements.

The following authors are those who, in addition to the originals and many essays, have contributed most to the composition of my treatise. If it does not prove to be too modest to deserve a glance from them, I shall not be afraid of being blamed for what I borrow; they will rather be indebted to a Frenchman for having contributed to initiate his countrymen into the master-pieces of English literature, and be far from refusing the help he asks from them.

Les auteurs suivants sont ceux qui, à côté des originaux et de beaucoup d'essais, m'ont le plus servi. Si mon manuel n'était trop modeste pour mériter un de leurs regards, je ne craindrais point d'être blâmé pour mes emprunts; ils sauraient trop de gré à un Français de contribuer à initier ses concitoyens aux chefs-d'œuvre de leur littérature, pour lui refuser le concours qu'il leur demande.

Allibone's *Dictionary of English Literature and British and American Authors.* 3 vol.

Chambers's *Cyclopaedia of English Literature.* 2 vol.

A Compendious History of English Literature, and of the English Language, from the Norman Conquest, by **George L. Craik.** 2 vol.

A Manual of English Literature, by **Thomas Arnold.** 1 vol.

A First Sketch of English Literature, by **Henry Morley.** 1 vol.

A History of English Literature, by **Thomas Shaw.** 1 vol.

Handbook of English Literature, by **Joseph Angus.** 1 vol.

Handbook of the English Tongue, by **Joseph Angus.** 1 vol.

A History of English Literature; with an Outline of the Origin and Growth of the English Language, by **William Spalding.** 1 vol.

Primer of English Literature, by **Stopford Brooke.** 1 vol.

A History of English Literature, by Professor Dr. **J. Scherr.** Translated from the German. 1 vol.

A Manual of English Prose Literature, by **William Minto.** 1 vol.

Dictionary of English Literature, by **Davenport Adams.** 1 vol.

A Brief Handbook of English Authors, by **Oscar Fay Adams.** 1 vol.

A Dictionary of General Biography, by **William L.R. Cates.** 1 vol.

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A SHORT HISTORY

OF THE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

CHAPTER I

Writers before the Norman Conquest
670-1066

1. — The history of the English language and literature is a long one. It begins very early and is still going on in the year 1886.

The fathers of the modern English people lived in Sleswick, Jutland and Holstein before they took the sea and landed at various ports of Britain at various times. They drove back the Britons, whom they called Welsh, to the land now called Wales, and to Cornwall. In these two places the Britons remained as a distinct race with a distinct literature of their own; their stories and their poetry crept afterwards into English literature and had a great influence upon it. The whole tale of King

Arthur, of which English poetry and even English prose is so full, was a British tale.

2. — English became the predominant language from the Firth of Forth to the English Channel, and has continued so for more than thirteen centuries. During this time, it has, of course, undergone many changes. It has adopted many new words from other languages, and its forms have been altered to some extent; but it has lasted in unbroken continuity from its introduction until now.

The greater part of the foreign words that, besides words of British or Keltic origin, have been incorporated into English, and are now part and parcel of the language, may he devided into the following classes :

a. *Words of Scandinavian origin.* — Men of Scandinavian race (Norsemen and Danes) made repeated incursions into the island where the Saxons and the Angles had established themselves and spread their own language. In consequence of this a good many Scandinavian words made their way into the Anglo-Saxon tongue. Danish or Scandinavian forms appear in many names of places, such as *by* (town, as *Grimsby*); *holm* and *ey* (island, as in *Langholm*, *Orkney*), etc.

b. *Words of Latin origin.* — These words came in at different periods, and under various circum-

stances. A few Latin words, connected with names of places, were adopted by the Britons from the Romans, and by the Angles and Saxons from the Britons, and appear for example in *Chester* (castra), *Lincoln* (colonia), etc. A good many Latin words were introduced between the settlement of the Saxons and the Norman Conquest, by the ecclesiastics who brought Christianity into England. The contributions during this interval include many words of a religious character, for instance, *altar*, *cloister*, *cross*, etc. A much larger number of words of Latin origin came through the Norman-French. The Normans gave the names relating to feudalism, war, law, and the chase, as *armour*, *castle*, *esquire*, *advocate*, *falconer*, etc. The revival of the study of the classical languages led to the introduction of an immense number of Latin words.

c. *Words of greek origin.* — The Greek, together with the Latin, is the classical element of the English language. It was introduced at about the same periods as the Latin, but in a smaller proportion. The demands of science, and even of industry and the common arts, lead to the unceasing introduction of new Greek words : *telegraph*, *microphone*, *photography*, *diagnosis*, etc.

d. *Words of miscellaneous origin.* — The extensive intercourse maintained during the last

three hundred years with all parts of the world naturally led to the introduction of words from most languages of importance. Italian (*ballad, umbrella*), Spanish (*cigar, potato*), Portuguese (*commodore, porcelain*), Arabic (*alkali, magazine*), etc.

The Teutonic element prevails in modern English, and is by far the most forcible and expressive. Hence it predominates in all the finest poetry of England.

One great advantage which English has derived from the mingling of its two chief constituents, viz., Anglo-Saxon and Latin, is the great richness of its vocabulary, and its power of expressing delicate shades of difference in the signification of words by the use of pairs of words, of which one is Teutonic and the other Latin or French. Compare, for example, *feeling* and *sentiment*, *work* and *labour*, *bloom* and *flower*. The number of pairs of exactly synonymous words is small.

3. — The first English poems seem to have been written on the continent. The most remarkable is *Beowulf*. Its main actions are three : first, the fight of the hero, Beowulf, with the fiendish monster, Grendel, who had long infested the approaches to Heorot, the palace of Hrothgar, king of Denmark, and killed many noble Danes; secondly, the fight

of the same hero with Grendel's mother, whom he kills; thirdly, the deadly conflict between Beowulf and a huge dragon, keeper of a large treasure by the seashore. Beowulf succeeds in this last struggle, but receives a mortal wound. His body is burnt on a funeral pile by the seashore, and over his ashes is raised a large beacon-mound, easy to be seen by the sailors over the waves.

This old epic may have been written before the English conquest of Britain, in the fifth century. The scenery is laid among the Goths of Sweden and the Danes, and there is no mention of England. In its present form, it is manifestly the composition of a Christian writer, a Northumbrian poet, by whom it was probably edited in the eighth century, with Christian elements introduced into it. Its principal interest lies in what it tells us of the manners and customs of the forefathers of the English before they went to England. Their mode of life in peace and war is described as well as their ships, their towns, the scenery in which they lived, their feasts and amusements, their women and the reverence paid to them, the way in which they faced death, how they sang, and how they gave gifts and rewards. And the whole is told with Homeric directness and simplicity. The poem has been studied most attentively by German scholars,

as Grimm, Ettmüller, and others, for the sake of the light which it throws upon the origin of the Teutonic race.

4. — The first true English poem, native to the English soil, is the work of Caedmon; it is called *Caedmon's Paraphrase*, and was written about 670.

Caedmon lived in the latter part of the seventh century. His poetic vein came to light in a singular fashion. Employed as a servant of the monastery at Whitby in Yorkshire, he passed his best days without instruction, and knew nothing of the art of verse, so that at the feasts, when for the sake of mirth all sang in turn, he left the table. One night, having done so and gone to the stables, — for he had care of the cattle, — he fell asleep, and a stranger appeared to him and commanded that he should sing of the Beginning of Created Things. Whereupon he began to sing verses to the praise of God. In the morning he came to the steward, and told him of the gift he had received. He was ordered to tell his dream before learned men. When they had heard him, they all said that heavenly grace had been conferred on him by our Lord. Caedmon, receiving some education, was enrolled among the monks, and spent the remainder of his life in writing religious poetry. He *paraphrased* the history of the Old and New Testament. He sang

of the creation of the world and the origin of the human race, and the whole history as found in Genesis, concerning the going forth of Israel out of Egypt, and their entrance into the land of promise; of very many other narratives in Holy Scripture; of the Incarnation of our Lord, his Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension into heaven; of the descent of the Holy Ghost, and the teaching of the Apostles. He also composed many verses on the terror of the judgment to come, on the fearfulness of the punishments of hell, and the sweetness of the heavenly kingdom. The interest of the poem lies in the drawing of the characters. For instance, the fall of the angels and the hell, and the proud and angry cry of Satan against God from his bed of chains, are full of fierce war-rage, while the contrasts drawn between the peace of heaven and the swart horror of hell have the same kind of pathos as Milton's work on the same subject. Compare the following passage, a translation from a fragment of the *Paraphrase* by Mr George R. Merry, with certain passages of the first two books of the *Paradise Lost,* and you will be struck by the resemblance of the ideas : —

Then in his pride he spake who once outshone
In brightness all heaven's angels; whom the love
Of God enwheeled, till by his foolish pride

Moved to dire wrath the Almighty headlong hurled
Him down to torment and the bed of death;
Bade hell's high King be henceforth Satan called,
Rule hell's dark depths, nor ever war with heaven.
Thus Satan spake, pride welling in his heart,
And all around a sea of torturing fire :
O how unlike the place that once I knew
High in the heavens, the realm God gave me, but
The Omnipotent hath reft me of my throne,
And plunged me in the abyss of hell, and He
Shall give my home to man! That pains me most,
That Adam wrought of earth in heaven shall be
A throned power, find grace whith God, while I
Endure hell's torment! Would these hands were free
For one brief winter-hour, then with my host —
But ah, iron-bonds are round me once a King;
My limbs are galled, held fast by the hard clamps
Of hell, on all sides round a sea of flame,
Region of sorrow, fire unquenchable (1).

5. — It is to be noted that the English native poetry begins with a religious poem; it gave birth to many children. But if the forefathers of the English were a religious people, even as heathens, they were also a warlike one, and their poetry was as much of war as of religion. A Teuton loved before all things to hear of war and fighting. The war poetry of England at this time was plentiful. In the speeches of heralds and warriors before the fight, in the speeches and single combats of the chiefs, in the loud laugh and mock which follow a

(1) See *The Academy*, Febr. 7, 1885.

good death stroke, in the rapid rush of the verse when the battle is joined, there are passages worthy to be called Homeric. With Christianity a new spirit entered into war poetry and transformed it; the fatalism, for instance, was modified by the faith that the fate is the will of a good God.

6. — All poems of this time are not epic; there are also hymns and didactic poems. The Anglo-Saxon clergy, in their zeal to spread Christianity, wrote compositions of all kinds, and many of them contain passages of real poetical beauty. But biblical histories and legends, versions of parts of the Scriptures, translations and paraphrases of the Gospels are better written in prose than in verse; and if the metrical composition in old English is often of obscure elaboration, the prose is sometimes remarkable for its perspicuous simplicity. It is in **Alfred the Great**'s time (871-901) that English prose really improved. Charters, leases, ecclesiastical constitutions, the code of laws which was digested by Alfred, are the principal documents written in prose. Those matters of business, it is true, can scarcely claim a literary character. The best prose works are translations from the Latin, in many of which however the writers freely insert matter of their own. Alfred's favourite literary employment was that of rendering into his native tongue Latin

works, as selections from the Scriptures, the Soliloquies of St. Augustine, the Treatise of Gregory the Great on the Duties of the Clergy, the Ecclesiastical History of Beda, the Ancient History of Orosius, and the work of Boethius on the Consolation of Philosophy. Often, in dealing with these works, he was not a mere translator. If a passage of his author suggested a fact known to himself, the fact was added to the original, or substituted for it. Thus to the geographical portion of Orosius he adds an outline of the state of Germany, and gives also accounts, taken from the mouths of the adventurers, of a voyage to the Baltic, and another towards the North Pole. Alfred's views are worthy of attention. His object is, he says, "the translation of useful books into the language which we all understand; so that all the youth of England, but more especially those who are of gentle kind and at ease in their circumstances, may be grounded in letters, — for they cannot profit in any pursuit until they are well able to read English." King Alfred did more to preserve the beautiful old Saxon language than we can imagine. Without him the English tongue might have wanted half its meaning. Though his frame was racked by almost ceaseless pain, though he was never allowed to unbuckle the armour which he had put on in his youth, to

defend his fatherland against hordes of savage enemies, he pursued studies with a success which was far beyond the standard of his age.

7. — There is one monument of old English prose literature from which, rude and meagre as it is, modern scholars have derived valuable instruction; it is the *English Chronicle.* At first it was nothing but a record of the births and deaths of bishops and kings, and was probably a West-Saxon Chronicle. Alfred took it up, added largely to it, and raised it to the dignity of a national history. Afterwards it was continued, and it is the great contemporary authority in English history till 1154, when it abruptly closes with the death of Stephen. It is the first history of any Teutonic people in their own language; it is the earliest and the most valuable monument of English prose.

8. — As a whole, old English poetry and prose are rather concise; much more attention is paid to the goodness of the matter than to the form. Things are said in the shortest way; there are scarcely any similes, and the metaphorical expressions are rare. We see in this the character of the Anglo-Saxons : they were solid thinkers, without much imagination or mental fire. To form the English character, it was necessary that the harder and sterner elements of a new race should be mingled with the

softer Germanic type. The Danish invasions effected this; they commenced in 787, and terminated with the establishment of the Danish dynasty in 1017. Canute, after he had restored internal peace and order, showed a desire to patronize literary men. The Danes adopted with facility the Anglo-Saxon tongue, though importing into it many Danish words. The intellectual activity and literary culture of the South were still wanting; these were supplied by means of the Norman Conquest.

CHAPTER II

The Norman Period
1066-1350

1.— Even before the Conquest the Saxon language began to fall into contempt, and the French, or Frankish, to be substituted in its stead : a circumstance which at once facilitated and foretold the Norman accession. As early as the middle of the seventh century, it was the common practice of the Anglo-Saxons, to send their youth to the monasteries of France for education, and not only the language, but the manners of the French were

esteemed the most polite accomplishments. In the reign of Edward the Confessor (1042-1066), the resort of Normans to the English court was so frequent, that the affectation of imitating the Frankish customs became almost universal; and the nobility were ambitious of catching the Frankish idiom. " The polite luxury of the Norman ", says Lord Macaulay, " presented a striking contrast to the coarse voracity and drunkenness of his Saxon and Danish neighbours. He loved to display his magnificence, not in huge piles of food and hogsheads of strong drink, but in large and stately edifices, rich armour, gallant horses, choice falcons, well-ordered tournaments, banquets delicate rather than abundant, and wines remarkable rather for their exquisite flavour than for their intoxicating power. That chivalrous spirit, which had exercised so powerful an influence on the politics, morals, and manners of all European nations, was found in the highest exaltation among the Norman nobles. Those nobles were distinguished by their graceful bearing and insinuating address. They were distinguished also by their skill in negotiation, and by a natural eloquence which they assiduously cultivated. It was the boast of one of their historians that the Norman gentlemen were orators from the cradle. "

2. — The Norman Conquest (1066) introduced into England a foreign race of landholders who took the place of the ruling class in the preceding times, but not of the mass of the people. The only new settlers were the king, the barons with their military vassals, and the many churchmen who followed the Conqueror. The people, a mixture of the English with the Britons, continued to speak their own tongue, whilst the leading men spoke in French. For a long period literary works were not generally composed, either by lay writers of French origin who were rather warriors, or by the natives who became subjects, if not slaves, to the conquerors. What literature there was, was for the most part composed by the clergy, principally in Latin. Two Lombard priests adorned the annals of erudition in England in the latter half of the eleventh century, **Lanfranc** and **Anselm**, both brought by Duke William from his famous abbey of Bec. Being raised in succession to the primacy, they diffused among the ecclesiastics a respectable amount of classical learning, and themselves acquired high celebrity as theological writers. Lanfranc was chiefly famous for the dialectic dexterity with which he defended the Romish doctrine of the Eucharist. Anselm is held by many to have been the true founder of the scholastic philosophy.

Alexander de Hales called *The Irrefragable Doctor*, was a native of Gloucestershire; but he was educated and lived abroad. **Duns Scotus**, *The Subtle Doctor*, was born either in Northumberland or in Berwickshire, received his education from the Franciscan friars at Oxford, taught and wrote with extraordinary reputation both there and at Paris and Cologne, and died in the prime of life. **Roger Bacon**, a friar in the Franciscan monastery at Oxford, propounded in his *Opus Majus* curious conjectures, asserting the possibility of discoveries which have actually been made in modern times. Almost all historical writing is in Latin. Among the historians who have claims to notice, **William of Malmesbury** deserves honour as the first competent one since the time of Beda; he wrote a *Historia Regum Angliæ* which comes down to the year 1142. **Geoffrey of Monmouth** is the autor of a *Historia Britonum*, notorious for its unsifted mass of legendary fiction; he has preserved the fable of Arthur and the stories hardly better vouched of Lear and Cymbeline. The principal work, *Historia Major*, of **Matthew Paris**, a Benedictine monk of St. Albans, is written with very great spirit; it comes down to the year 1259.

3. — It would be interesting to inquire what means of education students had at their command during this period. The most important among these were the universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

King Alfred founded a school at Oxford which is believed to have become the celebrated University. At the Conquest of England by the Normans the dissolution of the University, if it had ever existed, seems to have been nearly complete. Towards the end of the eleventh century it revived and made upward progress. But it is not till the thirteenth century that we hear of Oxford as an important educational centre. We are told that there were in that place in 1231 thirty thousand members of the University.

Cambridge, which has trained so many minds of the highest order in more recent times, was comparatively uninfluential in the Middle Ages. About the year 1109, the monks of Croyland opened a school in a barn at Cambridge. The number of scholars gradually increased; and a large migration of Oxonians, in the year 1209, seems to have established the rising University on a permanent basis.

The distracted state of England often induced scholars to leave Oxford and Cambridge and fix

themselves in Paris, which took the lead in influence and numbers. So multitudinous was the number of students that they were divided, not according to schools, but according to nations. Whoever came were classified, either as Frenchmen, which included Spaniards, Italians and Orientals; as Englishmen or Germans, including the Hungarians, Scandinavians and Poles; or as Picards or Normans. On one occasion the University of Paris promised to send twenty-five thousand scholars to increase the pomp of a funeral.

4. — Next in importance to the universities as seats of education were the monasteries. These arose rapidly in every part of England after the Norman Conquest. William himself was a zealous promoter of the monastic institution. Nearly all the monasteries in England, till the introduction of the mendicant orders, about the year 1230, belonged to the Benedictine order, or some branch of it, and the devotion of the Benedictines to learning is well known. Among the houses especially distinguished for the learned men whom they produced were St. Albans, Malmesbury, Canterbury, and Peterborough. Besides the original works composed by monks of this period, we are indebted to their systematic diligence, for the preservation of the ancient authors. Every large monastery had its

scriptorium, in which manuscripts were kept, and the business of transcribing was regularly carried on by monks appointed for the purpose.

Marvellous was the influence of knowledge in the Middle Ages. Nor was the enthusiasm of individuals of short duration. In these days a lad has finished his education at twenty-one; in those days he had not done much more than begun it. It was not at all unusual for a man to spend ten years over philosophy. Men studied philosophy and theology at Paris fifteen or sixteen years, and continued scholars till between thirty of forty years of age. Grown men, and men with wives and families, were not ashamed — were proud to sit by the side of striplings, and learn the wisdom of the schools. Then they finished their education by attending different centres, and travelling to different countries; for instance, Innocent III. was at Rome, Bologna and Paris; Alexander V. shone at Paris and at Oxford.

5. — The knowledge of the times was very often tested by composition in Latin verse. **Josephus Iscanus,** a monk of Exeter, who flourished about the year 1210, wrote a long poem in Latin hexameters, entitled *De bello Trojano*, which possessed great literary merit. It had so much of classical purity, that even as late as the fifteenth

century, and after the general revival of learning, it was thumbed by school-boys in every grammar-school, ranked by teachers side by side with the genuine poets of Rome, and several times printed as a work of Cornelius Nepos.

Josephus Iscanus wrote another epic poem, entitled *Antiocheis*, the War of Antioch, or the Crusade, of which nothing remains but a fragment in which the poet celebrates the heroes of Britain, and particularly king Arthur. This author had accompanied king Richard the First to the Holy Land, and was an eye-witness of that heroic monarch's exploits among the Saracens, which afterwards he celebrated in the *Antiocheis*. Voltaire has expressed his admiration of the happy choice of subject which Tasso made. We here see a poet of an age much earlier than Tasso celebrating the same sort of expedition.

6. — A very amusing poem of the times is a satire called the *Speculum Stultorum*, written by **Nigellus Wireker,** a monk of Canterbury. The hero is Brunellus or Burnellus (little brown ass), the property of Bernardus, an Italian farmer. He runs away from his master, and begins to speculate on self-improvement. He considers that the fundamental misery of his condition lies in the shortness of his tail, and, to remedy this defect,

he seeks counsel and assistance from all quarters. He goes to consult a physician named Galienus. To get rid of him, Galienus tells him that the only way is to go to Salerno, and get the necessary recipe from the great medical school there. Burnellus studies at Salerno. At last, laden with phials, medicines and prescriptions, he sets out for home. Misfortunes, chiefly caused by monks, overtake him; dogs are set on him; they bite off half his tail; his baggage is thrown off, the phials broken, and the medicines lost. He is in despair; at last he resolves to go to Paris, that he may at least return home a scholar. He joins himself to the scholars of the English nation. He is thick-headed, and does not get on; so he resolves to turn monk. He passes in review all the orders. Not one of them pleases him entirely, and the idea occurs to him of founding a new order, which shall combine the good points and avoid the defects of all the rest. But suddenly his nose bursts out bleeding, and he takes this as a sign of coming evil. Bernardus his master appears, claims his property, and drives him off, after he has been on the loose for some five-and-twenty years. His master tells him that he shall have light work; only a few faggots, two brass panniers, two sacks of flour, and himself on the top of all.

For greater security, he cuts off both the ears of Burnellus:

> Funditus abscidit aurem Bernardus utramque,
> Cautior ut fieret cauteriatus ita.

Cured of ambition, our hero thenceforth subsides into the normal existence of donkeys.

One of the principal charms of the *Speculum Stultorum* is derived from the satirical description of the University of Paris and all the then existing orders of monks.

7. — As the literary attempts in English, after the Conquest, were often either imitations or translations of French pieces, it is necessary to say something about the French tongue early in the Middle Ages.

In Southern France was used the *Provençal* or tongue of Provence, named also the *Langue d'Oc*, or tongue of Oc, from the word in it corresponding to the English *yes*. It was more like to the Italian and Spanish than the modern French. Its poets called themselves *Troubadours*, that is, *Inventors*; just as the old English and Scottish poets were named *Makers*. Its poetry was chiefly lyrical, and became the favourite model of the early poets of Italy.

The dialect of Northern France was known as

the *Langue d'Oil* or *d'Oui*. In England they most often speak of it as Norman-French, because it was in Normandy that its cultivation was completed, and there also that important literary works were first composed in it. Its poets had the name of *Trouvères* or *Trouveurs*. The greater part of its poetry was narrative.

There were in the *Langue d'Oil* poems called *Fabliaux*, usually short stories, which had a familiar and comic tone. There were, again, the *Chivalrous Romances*, compositions more bulky, and almost always more serious in temper as well as more ambitious in design. In English literature we are concerned with Romances rather than with Fabliaux.

Romances were originally so called because they were written in the *Romance* tongue, that is, the dialect which the Roman occupation of Gaul had caused to grow up out of the gradual corruption of the Latin language and its adulteration with foreign words. Many of the tales with which story-books make the English familiar in their childhood, were originally French romances, composed at the period we are speaking of; they were then translated into English verse. One of the most famous of those romances which still survive in the English language is *Guy of Warwick*. In its simplest

shape, it is a devout legend, breathing an ascetic spirit. The hero deserts his wife and child to do battle in the Holy Land; returning home, he thinks proper, instead of rejoining his family, to hide himself in a hermitage near his castle; and only on his deathbed does he allow himself to be recognised.

8. — There is a free translation of a French verse-history of special interest; it is called *Brut.* A Welsh priest at the court of Henry I., named Geoffrey of Monmouth, put together or invented a number of Welsh legends, and made, as it has been said above, a fabulous *Historia Britonum.* He completed his work in 1147. Monmouth's stories got afterwards to France, where they were made into a poem with the ornaments of French romance. In that form they came back to England as the work of one **Robert Wace**, a Norman trouvère, who called his poem the *Brut d'Angleterre*, and completed it in 1155, shortly ofter the accession of Henry II. In this French form the story drifted through England, and at last fell into the hands of an English priest in Worcestershire, whose name was **Layamon.** He resolved to tell it in English verse to his countrymen, and doing so became the writer of the first English poem after the Conquest. It opened to the imagination of the

English people an immense, though a fabled, past for the history of the island they dwelt in, and made a common bond of interest between Norman and Englishman. The poem relates how Brutus, the great-grandson of Æneas, collecting a band of his Trojan kinsmen, descended from the exiles who had settled in Greece after the destruction of Troy, put himself at their head, and after a voyage full of peril and vicissitude landed at Darmouth in Totnes. He became the ancestor of the kings of Britain. The last king mentioned in the poem is Cadwalader, whose date is 689 A. D. The exploits of Arthur are related with great fulness. A great-grandson of Æneas becoming the ancestor of the kings of Britain reminds us of Francus, the son of Hector, and the Franks coming over from Troy. We cannot help smiling when we are assured that the history of Spain begins with Japheth; when historians always begin history from the creation of the world, pointing out Babylon, which had been destroyed centuries before, as existing — now identifying it with Cairo, and now with Bagdad; when Priam is dressed in ermine, with armorial bearings; when Nabuchodonosor is favoured with a seneschal, and surrounded by a court of barons. The versification of Layamon's Brut is very peculiar. The writer seems to have

been balancing between the example of his French prototype, who uses rhyme, and the attractions of the old native Saxon poets, who employed nothing but alliteration. There are many rhyming couplets, many which are both rhymed and alliterative, and others that are neither. As a whole, the old alliteration prevails. Though chiefly rendered from the French, there are not fifty French words in the work, which extends to about 16,000 long lines of four accents. Layamon is to English poetry afther the Conquest what Caedmon was to Anglo-Saxon poetry; he is the first of the new singers.

9. — From the beginning of the thirteenth century, there is a composition which its author, a canon of some priory in the east of England, whimsically called the *Ormulum*, from his own name, **Ormin** or **Orm**. The design, executed only in part, was that of constructing a kind of metrical harmony of those passages from the Gospels which are contained in the service of the mass. Great praise has been bestowed on its purity of doctrine. It has less of poetical merit than of ingenuity in reflection and allegory; and it is second only to Layamon's *Brut* as an instructive specimen of the transition stage of the English tongue. It has fewer Anglo-Saxon forms than the *Brut*, and more French

or Latin words. Its measure is a line of fourteen syllables, or more properly of seven accents; which is usually or always divisible into two lines. The verses are unrhymed, and very imperfectly alliterative. A system of orthography, invented by Ormin himself, requires the doubling of every consonant that follows a short vowel.

10. — Perhaps to the same time belongs the remarkable poem of *The Owl and the Nightingale*, probably written by **John of Guildorf.** Perched on a spray, whence she looks down with sovereign contempt on her unmelodious adversary, the Nightingale challenges the Owl to a contest and controversy regarding their respective qualities of song. The Owl consents; a dialogue follows, in which the Owl stands chiefly on the defensive, maintaining that her song is less harsh, and her appetite for mice and small birds less ravenous, than the proud Nightingale would allow. In the end they agree to go to Portesham, and submit their dispute to Master Nicholas of Guildford, who is the brother of John.

CHAPTER III

English Literature in the fourteenth century

1. — The old literary language seemed to have been destroyed by the Conquest. It lingered till Stephen's death (1154) in the *English Chronicle* From the twelfth century to the middle of the fourteenth there was no standard of English. Poems then were writtten for the middle class in dialects, not in a fixed tongue common to all writers; French was the language of the higher class. Little by little English got the better of French, though intermingled with many French words; thus was formed a new tongue, which became the modern English. King Edward III, by an act of 1362 ordered that the pleadings in all lawsuits, which had hitherto been conducted in French, should henceforth be carried on in English, so that the suitors might know what their lawyers were saying. Not that Edward liked English : his court rather remained French, and he himself knew, or at any rate used, no more of English than a few phrases, such as " Ha! St. George! " " Ha! St. Edward! "

2. — It was about the year 1362 when a long

and singular poem called *The Vision of Piers the Plowman* was written by a priest or monk named **William Langland**. It is a religious one, which has been compared with *The Pilgrim's Progress* of Bunyan in the seventeenth century. The stir it made among the people was very considerable; written, as it was, in the vernacular tongue, the very ploughboy could understand it. Langland lived in a time of religious revival, and was indebted for his success to the same cause as Wyclif. That revival was originally due to the preaching of the Friars in the thirteenth century, and to the noble example they set of devotion to the poor. But when the Friars became rich, the religious feeling they had stirred up turned against themselves. Another movement arose for the equal rights of man against the class system of the Middle Ages. It was a religious movement, when men said that they were equal before God and that goodness was in His eyes the only nobility. Thence arose a protest against the oppression of the people by the class of the nobles. These causes of bitter feelings were common to the Continent and to England in the fourteenth century; but there were two other causes special to England at this time. One was the utter misery of the people, owing to the French wars :

heavy taxation fell upon them, and they were ground down by severe laws, which prevented them from bettering themselves. They felt this all the more because many of them had bought their freedom, and began to feel the delight of freedom. The other cause was the Black Death, the Great Plague which in 1349, '62, and '69, swept over England; grass grew in the towns, whole villages were left uninhabited, a wild panic fell upon the people, which was increased by a terrible tempest in 1362. It was then that in their misery, pain and terror, they fled to religion, not only as their sole refuge, but also as supplying them with reasons for a social revolution.

3. — *The Vision of Piers the Plowman* consists of a long allegory (14000 lines), the general drift of which is this : that a plain man, seeking to gain such a practical knowledge of the Christian religion as will guide him in the right road to heaven, will vainly seek that knowledge from high prelates, or from any of the mendicant friars, but may perhaps chance to find it in a poor ploughman, who knows the four Gospels and has a conscientious spirit. The poet having supposed himself to fall asleep on the Malvern Hills, sees a series of the vices of the times, especially those which prevailed among the ecclesiastics. The allegories are worth

notice as specimens of a kind of invention appearing everywhere in the poetry of the Middle Ages. The *Lady Anima*, who represents the soul of man, is placed by *Kind*, that is nature, in a castle called *Caro* or the *Flesh;* and the charge of it is committed to the constable *Sir In-wit,* a wise knight, whose chief officiers are his five sons, *See-well, Say-well, Hear-well, Work-well,* and *Go-well*. One of the other figures is *Reason*, who preaches in the church of the king and his knights, teaching that all the evils of the realm are because of sin. Among the Vices, who are converted by the sermon, we see *Proud-heart*, who vows to wear haircloth; *Envy*, lean, cowering, biting his lips; and *Covetousness*, a bony, beetle-browed, ill-clothed caitiff. *Mercy* and *Truth* are two fair maidens; and the *Diseases*, the foragers of *Nature,* are sent out from the planets by the command of *Conscience*, before whom *Old Age* bears a banner, while *Death* rides after him in his chariot; and so on. The plan is confused; so much so, indeed, that it is not easy to discover how the title of the poem should be justified by the part assigned in it to the character of the ploughman. The general moral impression derived from reading this singular work, is of a mixed character. The author's touch is wavering, because his position was undefined.

He had made in early age a mistake, and had become a married clerk. He was driven into satire by seeing ecclesiastics who had avoided that mistake, rise to heights of dignity and influence from which he was for ever debarred. In spite of all his satirical writing, it would be an error to consider him a Puritan, much less a Lollard. Whatever he may say against the monks, he thinks there is no place like the cloister for perfection of life; however he may rail against corruption in the higher clergy, he strongly inculcates the obedience due to them and to the Pope. His poem was eagerly read by the labourers and fugitive serfs who collected round John Ball and Wat Tyler and sang:

When Adam delv'd and Eve span,
Where was then the gentleman?

The language of this curious old monument wears an air of antiquity beyond its age. It is a revival of the old alliterative system of metre, which still survived in some romances of the day, and was afterwards used in many imitations prompted by the popularity of Langland. The best of these, *Piers Plowman's Creed*, a poem 850 lines long, was written about 1394 by a Wyclifite. The writer, assuming the character of a plain unlet-

soned, and he retained his church-livings to the last. He died in 1384. After his death, there burst on the Lollards, his followers, a storm of persecution; it was to suppress this sect that the law for burning heretics was passed in Henry the Fourth's reign (1399-1413).

Dissent was crushed till the sixteenth century, and Wyclif's writings by that time became difficult of identification. The English are sure, however, of owing to him a translation of the Bible. Down to the year 1360, the Psalter appears to be the only book of Scripture which had been entirely rendered into English. Within less than twenty-five years from this date a prose version of the whole Bible was in circulation among the people. It may be impossible to determine with certainty the exact share which Wyclif's own pen had in the translation, but there can be no doubt that he took part in the labour of producing it, and that the accomplishment of the work must be attributed to his encouragement and direction.

It has been remarked, with justice, that the language of Wyclif's original compositions in English shows little advance beyond the point which had been reached in the early part of the century; but that his Bible, on which probably greater pains were bestowed, is very far superior, though still

ruder than several other compositions of the same date. As this translation is the first English prose work of any consequence, we will give an example of its style; let us take the first four verses of the 24th chapter of St. Luke's Gospel :

But in a day of the woke (*week*) ful (*very*) eerli (*early*) thei (*they*) camen (*came*) to the grave, and broughten (*brought*) swete (*sweetly*) smelling spices that thei hadden arayed (*had prepared*). And thei founden (*found*) the stoon turnyd (*turned*) away fro (*from*) the grave. And thei geden (*went*) in and founden not the bodi (*body*) of the Lord Jhesus. And it was don (*it was done — it came to pass*), the while thei weren astonyed (*while they were astonished*) in tought of this ting, so twey (*two*) men stodun (*stood*) bisidis hem (*by them*) in shynyng cloth (*in shining apparel*). And whanne thei dredden (*as thei were afraid*) and bowiden her semblannt (*and bowed down their faces*) into erthe (*to the earth*), thei seiden (*said*) to hem (*unto them*) what seeken ye (*why seek you*) him that lyueth (*the living*) with deede men (*among the dead*)? He is not here : but he his risun (*risen*) : have ye minde (*remember*) how he spak (*spoke*) to you whanne (*when*) he was yit (*yet*) in Golilee, and seide (*saying*), for it behoueth (*is necessary*) mannes sone (*the son of man*) to be bitakun (*delivered up*) into the hondis (*hands*) of synful men : and to be crucifyed : and the thridde (*third*) day to rise again.

5. — In the fourteenth century there is a book of which the manuscript copies are more numerous than those of any other old one; it does not belong to religious, but rather to light literature. Its author is sir **John Maundevile** (1322-1382), a

famous traveller to the East about the year 1340. It was originally written in French, and afterwards translated into Latin under the title of *Mirabilia Mundi*. About the year 1360 was published an English version also, entitled *The Voiage and Travaile of sir John Maundevile*, made by himself, that every man of the nation might understand the book. So the work appeared before Langland's and Wyclif's writings, and is the earliest one known in English prose; Maundevile, therefore, is called the *first writer in formed English*. His language is that spoken at court in the latter years of Edward III. About this time the knowledge of French, even among the educated classes, must have been ceasing to be universal.

What Maundevile himself saw he describes accurately, and he saw a great part of the world. Thirty-four years he wandered, even to India and the Tartars of Cathay, or China. He tells his *traveller's tales* with quaint delight, and sometimes with much grace. Certain chapters, however, are so filled with odd stories, that he must have derived them from hearsay, or his book must have been interpolated by other hands. The credulity which appears in it is unbounded. We are told of the *Land of Amazoim*, an island inhabited only by a race of warlike women; of rocks of adamant

in the Indian seas, which draw to them with irresistible force any ships that have any iron bolts or nails in them; of a tribe of people with hoofs like horses; of people with eight toes; of dwarfs, and of a one-legged race whose one foot was so large that they used to shade themselves from the sun with it. These marvellous stories made the book popular down to the time when foreign travel became more common; then it began to be in less high estimation, but continued to be read with profit by students knowing how to distinguish between a fabulous story and a true one. When reading Maundevile, we are often reminded of Herodotus, who however has a higher degree of intelligence.

6.—Maundevile is ranked among the story-tellers of England. After him the line of these writers is represented by **John Gower** (1328-1402?), who is chiefly affected by the French influence. Fifty *balades* prove with what grace he could write when a young man in the French tongue about the affairs of love. As he grew older he grew graver, and became rather a religious and social reformer; but he had no sympathy with the Lollards :

> **Beware that thou be nougt oppressed**
> **With anticristes Lollardie.**

His principal productions were three books, which are treated in some manuscripts as one work, —respectively entitled *Speculum Meditantis*, *Vox Clamantis*, and *Confessio Amantis;* the first is written in French, the second in Latin, the third in English. This diversity of language marks the unsettled state of the literary language of England towards the end of the fourteenth century. We shall say something only of the last-named work, since it is written in English. The materials are gathered in part from Vincent de Beauvais, a Dominican who enjoyed the confidence of St. Louis. It is a dialogue between a lover and a priest of Venus. The Provençal poets had introduced this fashion of deifying Love, and painting him as the sovereign ruler over human life and destiny. The poem owed its origin (1393) to a request of Richard II. Gower was rowing on the Thames, when the royal barge drew near, and he was called to the king's side. " Book some new thing, " said the king, " in the way you are used, into which I myself may often look ". Hence the *Confession of a Lover*. It is a miscellaneous collection of physical, metaphysical, and ethical reflections, and of stories culled from the common repertories of the Middle Ages. All these are bound together by a fantastic thread, in which a lover makes his shrift to a priest of Venus,

named Genius, and receives advice and consolation from his anomalous confessor.

The following passage will furnish a specimen of Gower's manner in his didactic strain. The subject of the dialogue is the moral danger arising from the two principal senses, seeing and hearing. The duty which is thus imposed on us, is illustrated by a piece of fabulous science. There is (so Genius instructs his pupil) a serpent named Aspidis, who bears in his head the precious stone called the carbuncle, which enchanters strive to win from him by lulling him to sleep with magic songs. The wise reptile, as soon as the charmer approaches, lays himself down with one ear pressed flat on the ground, while he covers the other with his tail. So ought we obstinately to refuse admission to all evil impressions presented through the bodily organs.

Gower was a contemporary and a friend of Chaucer, who did not disdain to exchange borrowed passages with him.

CHAPTER IV

Chaucer and his imitators

1. — As this little book is designed chiefly to make my pupils, and perhaps other French stu-

dents, acquainted with the works only of celebrated English writers, I omit a great many names but little known, in order to gain space for fuller notices of such names as Chaucer's, Shakespeare's, Milton's, etc.

The time of **Geoffrey Chaucer**'s birth has been much discussed; it must, in all likelihood, be assigned to the year 1328. The parents of the child are considered to have then lived in London; the father was probably a vintner there.

The writings of the poet were but part of the occupation of a long life fruitful in activity and vicissitude. He was educated at a university, but whehter at Oxford or Cambridge is not clear; he studied law. When a man, he became connected with the English court. His chief patron was John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, who married Katherine Swynford, Chaucer's wife's sister. He was repeatedly employed in embassies, both to France and to Italy. He also received several offices at home. Thus, born of a tradesman class, he was in every sense of the word a fine gentleman, highly cultivated, both by life and study; he knew men and the world intimately, and proved it by his writings. He died on the 25th of October, 1400, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, the first poet of the *Poets' Corner*.

2. — Chaucer's writings are numerous; some of them are translations, or foreign tales worked out in English; such as his *Tale of Troylus and Cryseyde,* taken from Boccaccio, and his *Romance of the Rose,* a translation of our famous *Roman de la Rose.* Every French student knows that the *Roman de la Rose* is a long allegorical work written in octosyllabic verse by two poets, Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung. The originator of the design, Lorris — who died in 1260 — composed about 4,000 verses; according to the taste of those days, nothing could be conceived more exquisite in sentiment or more refined in diction. Jean de Meung continued the work in a very different strain, lashing whatever abuses he found in the court, the castle, and the convent. Chaucer translated the whole of Lorris' portion; but of the 18,000 lines and more which were written by Meung he adopted only about 3,600.

His most famous compositions are the *Canterbury Tales,* the plan of which may have been suggested by the *Decameron* of Boccaccio; the later, like the earlier work, consists of a framework created for the purpose of inserting tales in. The Italian writer represents ten friends assembled during the prevalence of the plague in a country house outside the walls of Florence, and beguiling

the tedium of a ten days' quarantine by each telling a story daily. These friends are replaced in the English poem by about thirty pilgrims, bound to the shrive of St. Thomas-a-Becket at Canterbury; each of them (except the host) binds himself to tell two stories in going and two in returning. Harry Baily is the host of the Tabard Inn, at Southwark, from which the expedition starts; he is its guide and chief. He is to tell no tale himself, but to be the judge of those which the other pilgrims tell. Twenty-four of these tales have come down to us, some serious, others humourous; two of them are prose compositions; others are incomplete. This incompleteness is in marked contrast to the symmetrical exactness with which the less ambitious plan of the *Decameron* is worked out.

3. — The most valuable part of the Canterbury Tales is the Prologue, in which the poet gives a graphic description of his pilgrims, full of good-natured satire. This picture shows us the real living face of English society. We see the pious cavalcade in the yard of the Tabard Inn, preparing to start. There is the stately knight who has travelled far and wide in Christian and heathen lands in search of adventures; by his side is his son, the young squire, a graceful rider, dancer, flute-player, and rhymer, with curly locks and richly embroidered

surcoat. Here we see the prioress, Madame Eglantine, half nun, half lady of the world. There is the fat monk, and in contrast to him the thin student of Oxford on his half-starved mare. There is the widow of Bath, who has buried five husbands; then the red-haired miller, who precedes the cavalcade blowing the bagpipe; the merchant with his forked beard; a doctor, a peasant, a cook, a boatman, etc.

The stories which the pilgrims tell are as different in kind as the pilgrims themselves; now they are comic, now serious. The materials for both kinds were not wanting, Italian novelists and French fabliaux-writers having collected masses of them. Chaucer knew how to chose, and every tale bears the stamp of his solid and original genius. It has been regretted that he sometimes sinks into a licentiousness of thought and sentiment which might render more than one of his scenes quite unpresentable to honest readers. Filthy thinks in a book certainly degrade its author. But Chaucer lived in a time when decorum in sentiment and expression was unknown. In what fearful indecencies long after him did our great Rabelais indulge! We often form exaggerated notions about the moral innocence of our ancestors : ages of ignorance are taught to be ages of purity. The

direct contrary is the case. Rude periods have grossness of manners; men are less ashamed as they are less polished. Great refinement unquestionably multiplies criminal pleasures, but at the same time prevents the actual commission of many enormities; at least it preserves public decency, and suppresses public licentiousness. When in an author such as Chaucer we find obcenities we must ascribe them rather to his age than to himself, and go further. The virtue of a gentleman would be a very valetudinarian virtue, if he should be made vicious by finding a few immoral passages in a book he reads before all for its true English humour and comic power.

4. — Why did Chaucer write in English, and not in French? Was it because he did not like France? No, he had better reasons for doing so. He was too great, too true a man, not to see that the time had passed away when romance-writers could treat all other classes in the community as non-existent, except kings, churchmen, nobles, knights, and day-labourers. For four of these classes French would have been a very suitable medium of address; Chaucer would certainly have consulted immediate popularity and credit better if he had written in French; but he had an eye for facts. The middle class had begun to exist; merchants,

franklins, ship-owners, and retail-traders lived and moved in England, and were beginning to assert their right to work and grow very strenuously; Chaucer discerned the new social aspect, and with the instinct of genius felt that it was pregnant with the future of England. He wrote, therefore, in the language of the middle class; and the power and beauty of what he wrote, re-acting on the movement already begun, accelerated its pace, and made it impossible for the aristocratic classes to retain their foreign tongue.

Though Chaucer's language is English, it contains a great many French words, and even idiomatic French forms. In his childhood he had studied Greek and Latin at the college, and then these tongues used to be taught with the help of French books. Members of the universities were ordered to converse in Latin or in French. When a man and a writer, Chaucer, full of French ideas, was induced or forced to express them in the forms in which they had entered his mind, so much the more as there were no terms in the Anglo-Saxon tongue for many philosophical, metaphysical, and abstract thoughts of all kinds.

The following passage taken in the Prologue from the description of the Parish Priest or Parson is a pattern of Chaucer's language; French

readers, though unacquainted with old English forms, can understand it :

> A good man was ther (there) of religioun,
> And was a pore (poor) Persoun (parson) of a toun (town);
> He was also a lerned man, a clerk
> That Cristes gospel gladly wolde preche (would preach);
> His parischens (parishioners) devoutly wolde he teche;
> Benigne he was, and wondur diligent,
> And in adversite ful pacient.
> . . . .
> . . . .
> A better priest I trowe (trouve) ther nowher non is.
> He waytud (aspired ?) after no pomp ne reverence,
> Ne maked him a spiced conscience,
> But Cristes love, and his apostles twelve,
> He taught, and ferst he folwed (followed) it himselve.

5. — Chaucer told his tales with so much homeliness, that a child would understand him; but at the same time with so much power, beauty and science, that he would be the delight of learned men. He had made himself familiar with the Latin literature, both the classical and that of his day. There are few Roman authors whom he does not quote, from Virgil to Boethius. His acquaintance with the fathers and schoolmen is wonderful for a layman; he quotes often from the Vulgate translation of the Bible, from the works of St. Jerome, St. Augustine, and other fathers. He was for his time a far more deeply-read man than Shakespeare

was for his. His contemporaries, and those who lived nearest to his time, universally extol him as *the chief Poete of Britaine, the flour of Poetes*. He had many imitators, the best known of whom we shall presently mention. In the Elizabethan period, when the English language was greatly altered, Chaucer, though admired, was looked upon as no subject fort direct imitation. In our days his works are published, read, studied, and criticised by the English with a praiseworthy zeal; but the judgments of the critics are very different. According to some, he is the *well of English undefiled;* according to others he has corrupted and deformed the English idiom by an immoderate mixture of French words. At all events, this mixture, if a crime, cannot be laid to his charge.

6. — Chaucer was the centre of a group of literary men, of whom he was the friend or master; who admired an loved him, and strove to imitate him. Of these, John Gower was the chief. After his death, a swarm of imitators rushed in upon his wake; none equalled him. Their writings cannot interest any but students of the history of the English language. We will, however, pay a little attention to the compositions of the two better ones, John Lydgate and Stephen Hawes.

John Lydgate (1375-1430?) was a Benedictine monk. He began to write before Chaucer's death, and laboured for more than half a century, producing an immense number of compositions, many of a temporary kind. It is his story-telling which links him closest to his master. His three chief poems were the *Falls of Princes,* the *Storie of Thebes,* and the *Troye Book.* The first is a translation of a French version of Boccaccio's *De Casibus Virorum et Feminarum illustrium.* It tells the tragic fates of great men and women from the time of Adam to the capture of king John of France at Poitiers. The plan is dramatic; the sorrowful dead appear before Boccaccio, who is sitting in pensive mood in his library, and each tells of his downfall.

The *Storie of Thebes* is introduced as an additional Canterbury Tale, a great deal being borrowed from the of *Thebaid* of Statius, and the *Theseide* of Boccaccio; as a whole, it is extremely dull; it tells the whole story of Thebes, from its foundation by Amphion to its destruction by Theseus. A few flashes of spirit and touches of picturesqueness prevent from time to time the reader from sleeping, as when, for instance, the unhappy sons of Oedipus are invested in chivalrous drapery.

In the *Troye Book* or *History of the siege of Troy*, the fall of Ilium is similarly dealt with, and adorned with descriptions of the same kind. The whole is very long and tedious. Far from rushing, like Homer and Virgil, *in medias res*, Lydgate prefers the example of Horace's cyclic poet who *gemino orditur ab ovo.*

Lydgate translated from the French the *Daunce of Machabre* or Dance of Death. In this poem Death accosts first the Pope, then the Emperor, then the representatives of every earthly profession and calling in succession; each of these replies in his turn; and all, with more or less moralizing, own the levelling hand and irresistible might of death. Lydgate apologizes in a very pretty manner for his not being clever enough in translating into English the curious French metres :

> Owt of the Ffranche I drew it of extent,
> Not word for word, but following the substance,
> And fro Parys to Englande it sente
> Only of purposs yow to do plesaunce:
> Rude of langage, — I was not borne in Ffraunce —
> Have me excusèd; my name is John Lidgate,
> Off here tunge I have no suffisaunce
> Her corious metres in Englisshe to translate.

7. — **Stephen Hawes** wrote in the reign of Henry the Seventh (1485-1509); he must have

died after 1509, since among histho emsp ere is a Coronation ode celebrating the accession of Henry the Eighth. He might be referred either to the fifteenth century or the next. His name marks the transition period between the influence of Chaucer, Gower and Lydgate, and a new one which entered into English verse from Italy; but he represents the transition by an imitation of the old work. Amid many poems more in imitation of Lydgate than of Chaucer, his long allegorical poem entitled the *Pastime of Pleasure* is the best. It is in the same taste as the *Roman de la Rose*. Its substance is briefly this :

The prince *Grand Amour* relates the story of his own life and death. Inspired by the report of *Fame*, with affection for *la Bell Pucell*, he is required to make himself worthy of her, by accepting instruction in the *Tower of Doctrine*. There and in dependent towers, he is duly instructed in the *seven sciences*, which are simply the old Trivium and Quadrivium of the schools, Grammar, Logic, Rhetoric, Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, and Astronomy. In the *Tower of Music* he meets *la Bell Pucell*. She bestows on him her love; then he is separated from her, in order to visit the *Tower of Chivalry*, and there to be made a knight. He has many difficulties to overcome, but finally mar-

ries *la Bell Pucell.* He lives happily with her, till he is made prisoner by *Age*, who gives him *Policy* and *Avarice* for companions. At length he is slain by *Death*. His name and memory are enrolled for perpetual honour with those of the *nine worthies*, of whom three are of the pagan order of things, Hector, Alexander and Caesar, — three of the Jewish, Josue, David, and Judas Machabeus, — and three of the Christian, Arthur, Charlemagne, and Godfrey de Bouillon.

The emblematical incidents and characters which have thus been sketched, recall to us once more the allegorical school of poetry, which was so widely spread throughout the Middle Ages, and in which Chaucer did not disdain to study. The recollection of them, again, will be useful, when, in becoming acquainted with the Elizabethan masterpieces, we shall see the same turn of thought prevailing in Spenser's *Fairie Queene.*

The language of the *Pastime of Pleasure* exhibits a new character. Instead of the old English words which abound in Chaucer, there appear in Hawes many expressions tending to latinize the English tongue. For this he incurs severe reproaches from the English critics, who charge him with an excessive crudity of versification.

8.—Among Chaucer's imitators are two Scottish

poets, James I., king of Scotland, and William Dunbar.

James I. was a prisoner in England when his father died, in 1406. There he probably wrote his principal work, the *King's Quhair* (or Book), through which the Scots, in all probability, first made the acquaintance of Chaucer. In this poem he celebrated in Chaucer's style his lady-love and future queen, the Lady Jane Beaufort. Imprisoned at the court of England, he sees from the window of his tower at Windsor—so he tells us in his graceful poem — the beautiful Lady Jane, walking in the garden with other ladies. Her golden hair gathered into a net of pearls, a chain encircling her slender throat, her bosom on which a locket of rubies threw sparks of fire, her white robe caught up for walking, her noble mien and gait, in short her whole appearance charms him, and after her disappearance he remains by the window of his prison, lost in longing dreams, until *Phoebus has bid farewell to leaf and flower*. James regained his liberty and his throne, the Lady Jane became his queen, and her faithfulness was proved in the fearful catastrophe in which the life of the poet-king came to such a tragic conclusion in 1437. James being surprised by his rebellious barons, the queen threw herself between her husband

and his murderers, received several stabs, and had to be torn by brute force from his arms before they were able to kill him.

William Dunbar (died about 1520) was a more excellent imitator of Chaucer than James. He was no unsuccessful rival of his model in the comic tale and in the moral allegory. First among his allegorical poems is the *Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins* celebrating their orgies in hell. This poem is wonderfully striking; but it would be almost impossible to describe, decorously, either its design, or the audacious flight of its humourous malice.

Dunbar followed the form and plan of Chaucer especially in *The Thistle and the Rose*, and in *The Golden Terge* (shield). The first of these poems was written in 1503 to commemorate the nuptials of James IV. of Scotland and Margaret, daughter of Henry VII. The design of the second is to show the gradual and imperceptible influence of love when indulged to excess. Both are allegoric poems, and both begin with Chaucer's conventional May morning. So the influence of the father of English poetry is carried on, even in Scotland in spite of her enmity with England, to the end of the fifteenth century and into the sixteenth.

CHAPTER V

English Renaissance before the Reformation

1. — The hundred years that followed Chaucer's death have been called the most barren in English literature. No great books were produced, it is true, in the fifteenth century, or even in the first part of the sixteenth. Not that the human mind slept in England during this period; on the contrary, it was an age of active preparation. It witnessed the introduetion into England of the art of printing, the effect of which was to multiply copies of previous books, to reduce their price, to enlarge the circle of readers, and to supply abundantly materials for thought. It was signalized by the foundation of many schools and colleges : Eton, King's College at Cambridge, the three new universities of St. Andrews, Glascow, and Aberdeen, in Scotland, etc. Henry VIII. founded Trinity College at Cambridge, a large and noble one, destined to great celebrity. As for the writers of this time, besides the imitators of Chaucer, we have a few names to point out : these are either scholars to whom England owed the rise of the *new learning* and study of

the Humanities, or poets, or prose writers of different kinds.

2. — The fightings and plottings of the Yorkist and Lancastrian factions, were the cause of the time not being with the English a time of erudition. Revival of classical learning had been already in progress a century back on the continent when it made its appearance in England. Yet the Wars of the Roses did not stop the reading of books. Henry VI., and Edward IV., and some of the great nobles were lovers of books, and when Caxton introduced the art of printing into England, he found great patrons.

William Caxton was a merchant of London. He went to the Low Countries, where he acted for some years as an agent for English merchants. While living on business, he made himself master of the art of printing recently invented by John Gutenberg at Strasburg (1440). He printed the first book in English at Bruges in 1475; this is believed to have been a translation made by Caxton himself from the French and entitled *The Recueil of the Historyes of Troye*. In the same place and in the same year Caxton published another translation from the French by himself, *The Game and Play of the Chesse*. The first book printed in England was the *Dictes and Sayinges of the Philosophers*;

it bears the inscription, "Enprynted by me, William Caxton, at Westmestre, the yere of our Lord MCCCCLXXVII." The press was set up in the Almonry near Westminster Abbey; it is clear, therefore, that the Church, far from being hostile to the proceedings, regarded them with approval, and was disposed to further them by substantial aid.

Caxton translated or wrote about sixty different books, all of which went through his own press before his death in 1491. About forty-four of these are in the British Museum. They are generally of a popular cast, and indicate a low state of taste and information in the public for which they were designed. By the fixing power of the press, Caxton kept the Midland English, which Chaucer had established as the tongue of literature, from further degradation. Fifty years later (1527) Tyndale's New Testament fixed it for ever as the standard of English, and the Elilzabethan writers kept it in its purity.

Caxton was aided in his enterprise by Anthony Woodville, Earl of Rivers, and by John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, who translated Cicero's *De Amicitia* and Caesar's *De Bello Gallico*. When the latter, accused of cruelty in his Irish administration, lost his head on Tower Hill, Caxton remained his friend and most pathetically lamented his death.

3. — Already before the introduction of the art of printing into England, famous libraries had been formed there by men fond of books. Humphrey, the good Duke of Gloucester, uncle of Henry VI., had collected a great many manuscripts and brought over to England Italian scholars to translate works. The above mentioned Earl of Worcester considerably increased Humphrey's libraries. Many Englishmen went to Italy to study the old Greek authors, on whom the scholars driven from Constantinople by the Turks were lecturing in the schools of Florence. When Erasmus came to England in 1498, he found Crocyn and Linacre at Oxford teaching the Greek they had learnt at Florence from Chalcondylas; he became a friend of these scholars, as well as of Colet, another patron of the new learning. Colet founded the famous St. Paul's school; he built it in St. Paul's churchyard, on the site which it still occupies. All his patrimony — and it was not small, for he was the son of a wealthy knight who had been twice Lord Mayor of London — was given up to the school.

4. — Between the scholars to whom the English owe the revival of learning and the prose writers before the Reformation, we may place a few poets whose names and works deserve to be preserved.

English historians of literature fill up the blank

in true poetry between Chaucer and Elizabeth with about seventy poets. We may let most of them sleep, and content ourself with adding to the names of John Lydgate, Stephen Hawes, James I., and William Dunbar mentioned in the preceding chapter, those of Alexander Barclay, John Skelton, Surrey, Thomas Wyatt, and David Lyndsay.

In the kind of poetry prevailing at this time, we at first find nothing higher than satirical features of actual life depicted in a spirit of restlessness and discontent.

In 1508, **Alexander Barclay**, a priest, published the *Ship of Fools*, partly a translation from a German poem (Narrenschiff) of an eminent professor and jurisconsult of Strasburg, called Sebastian Brant (died in 1520). The main body of the work contains the descriptions of one hundred and fifteen fools, gathered together in a ship bound to a distant country, Narragonia, i. e., the country of fools. The purpose is partly satirical, partly didactic; no book shows better the corrupt manners of the age.

Brant's poem appeared in 1494; it was translated into Latin (Navis stultifera) in 1497 by one of Brant's disciples, Locher, and in 1507 by another, Jodocus Badius. As soon as 1497, it had been rhymed by a Frenchman, P. Rivière, under the

title of *la Nef des Folz du Monde*. Alexander Barclay compiled his *Ship of Fools* from the German, the French and the Latin. Thus the foibles and crimes of mankind were lashed at about the same time and in the same way, in vernacular verse, in Germany, France and England.

5. — If certain works, such as Barclay's, have but little value, others are better. In Skelton's satires, for instance, there are a naturalness and a humour which make them still readable.

John Skelton was a secular priest; he lived in the early part of the sixteenth century. When the religious and political disturbances began in Henry VIII.'s time, he became excited by church reformation. After having been the tutor of this king, he satirized, during a part of his reign, ecclesiastical and social abuses, attacking great men in the full flush of their power, and taking greater liberties with none than with the formidable Wolsey. The personalities vere often so undisguised, and the malicious bitterness was so provoking, that to escape from the Cardinal's wrath, Skelton had to take sanctuary at Westminster; the fiercest satire on the Cardinal was the poem *Why come ye not to court*.

Skelton was not only a satirist; his pretty and new love lyrics foreshadow the Elizabethan imagi-

nation and life, and the *Boke of Phyllyp Sparowe*, which tells the grief of a nun for her sparrow killed by a cat, is as gay as it is inventive. His poems are not only interesting for their closeness of application to historical incidents and persons; they are singularly though coarsely energetic, and do not altogether want glimmerings of poetical fancy. His command of words is quite extraordinary. He was an admirable scholar. Erasmus calls him the *glory and light of English letters*. Through him rapid progress was made in the development of the language. His task was much aided by his unscrupulous coinage of new terms, and by his frequent insertion of Latin words and lines into his English. We give here a short specimen of his verse taken from *Phyllyp Sparowe*. The nun Jane Scrope thus curses the cat:

The leopardes sauvage,
The lyons in theyr rage,
Myght catche thé in theyr pawes,
And gnawe thé in theyr jawes!
The serpentes of Lybany
Myght stynge thé venymously!
The dragones with their tonges
Myght poison thy lyver and longes, etc.

TRANSLATION:

The leopards savage,
The lions in their rage,

Might catch thee in their paws,
And gnaw thee in their jaws!
The serpents of Libya
Might sting thee venomously!
The dragons with their tongues
Might poison thy liver and lungs, etc.

6. — While poetry under Barclay, Skelton and others chiefly became an instrument of satire, it revived as an art at the close of Henry VIII.'s reign in **Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey** and his friend **Thomas Wyatt.** They were both Italian travellers, and in bringing back to England the inspiration they had gained from Petrarca, they remade English poetry. They are the first really modern English poets, the first who have anything of the modern manner. Though Italian in sentiment, their language is more English than Chaucer's, that is, they use fewer Romance words. They handed down this purity of English to the Elizabethan poets, to Sackville, Spenser, and Shakespeare. They spread over England a new kind of poetry, the amourist poetry.

The *Amourists*, as they are called, were poets who composed a series of poems on the subject of love, — sonnets mingled with lyrical pieces after the manner of Petrarca. The sonnets of Shakespeare, Spenser, etc., are all poems of this kind.

Surrey and Wyatt were the English ushers in a poetical school, in which succeeding poets became both pupils and teachers; and their studies in the poetry of Italy prepared the way for introducing to the notice of their successors the greater Italian works which were produced in their century. Their familiarity with Petrarca's lyrics were a step towards Spenser's acquaintance with the chivalrous epic of Tasso. Surrey's *Songes and Sonnettes*, together with those of Wyatt, were first published in 1557. His translation of the second and fourth books of the Aeneid is in the ten-syllabled, unrhymed verse, which is now called *blank verse*. The unwonted metre was not handled very skilfully by Surrey, and did not in his hands deserve much praise; it had neither the true form nor the harmony which it afterwards acquired; yet its success was great enough to instantly recommend it for adoption. Sackville introduced it into drama; Marlowe, in his *Tamburlaine the Great*, made it the proper verse of the drama, and Shakespeare, Beaumont, and Massinger used it splendidly. Milton perfected it in poetry proper. Without Surrey's form of versification, English drama and English epic would alike have been incomparably meaner, feebler and less animated.

7. — To the period which we are speaking of

belong several Scottish poets; the greatest among them was William Dunbar, mentioned above as an imitator of Chaucer. The boldest satirist was **Sir David Lyndsay** (1499-1555). He is the Jean de Meung of the sixteenth century. He wrote an allegorical satire entitled *The Dreme* (dream), in which he is conducted to the infernal regions, then to Purgatory, then to the empyrean and the celestial abodes. This topography is without doubt barrowed from Dante. In 1537 he composed a lament on the untimely death of Magdalene, the first wife of James V., under the title of *The Deploratioun of the Deith of Quene Magdalene.* She was a French princess, and Lyndsay descants with feeling and good taste on the universal joy which the celebration of the marriage at Paris had spread at the time among the people of both nations : —

Bot at his mariage maid upon the morne,
Sic solace and solempnizatioun
Was never sene afore, sen Christ was borne,
Nor to Scotland sic consolatioun!
There selit was the confirmatioun
Of the weill kepit ancient alliance
Maid betwix Scotland and the realme of France.

TRANSLATION IN PROSE :

But at his marriage made upon the morn, — such solace and solemnization — was never seen before, since Christ was born, — nor to Scotland such consolation! — There

was sealed the confirmation of the well-kept ancient alliance — made between Scotland and the realm of France.

Lyndsay made bitter attacks on the catholic clergy, inveighed against the court of Rome, called aloud for a general reformation, and hastened the religious war in Scotland.

8. — English prose literature had been begun by Maundevile, and continued by Chaucer, Wyclif and others; it was worthily carried on in the fifteenth century by Pecock, Fortescue, etc., after whom Thomas More, Tyndale and Ascham deserve to be mentioned in the first half of the sixteenth century.

The religious war between the Lollards and the Church raged during the reigns of Henry V. (1413-1422), and Henry VI. (1422-1461). In the time of the latter, **Reginald Pecock**, a Welshman appointed to the see of St. Asaph, took the line of vehement opposition to the teaching of the Lollards; he did it not in Latin, but in homely English. He fought Lollardism with public sermons in English, and with tracts in English. After 1449, when bishop of Chichester, he published his principal work, *The Repressor.** The Lollards disliked it because it defended the customs and practices of the Church, such as the use of images, pilgrimages,

the holding of landed estates by the clergy. Churchmen burnt it because it appealed rather to reason than to Church authority, and agreed with the *Bible-men,* that the Bible was the only rule of faith. In 1457, *The Repressor* was condemned in a synod at Westminster; Pecock was deposed from his bishopric, and forced to make a full retractation of his opinions.

Pecock still wrote in old obsolete English, which we find to have gone out of use towards the accession of Edward IV. (1461). He was about the last of the writers of that age who used the pronouns *hem* and *her* for *them* and *their*. He is not easily understood by a reader unaccustomed to his language; one requires a dictionary, or else must help one's self out by conjecture.

9. — Pecock died about 1460. Ten years later appeared **Sir John Fortescue**'s discourse on *The Difference between an Absolute and a Limited Monarchy,* in which the modern reader finds scarce any difficulty; he reads it almost as fluently as books of his own time, though antiquated words and forms of termination frequently occur. The work abounds in keen remarks and curious information, and throws much light on the condition of the English peasantry in the fifteenth century, as compared with that of France. Fortescue draws a

striking, though perhaps exaggerated contrast between the condition of the French under an arbitrary monarch, and that of his own countrymen, who even then possessed considerable privileges as subjects. The French he describes as borne down by public burdens : they drink water, they eat no other meat than a little bacon, or the entrails of beasts slain for the nobles; their wives and children go barefoot.

As Fortescue's language appears as an obsolete one only on account of the confusion of the orthography, we will alter its strange spelling in an interesting passage relative to the commons of England and those of France, and show that it is easy to be understood even by children :

Some men have said, that it war good for the king, that the Comons of England wer made poer, as be the Comons of Fraunce. For than, thay would not rebell as now thay done often tymes; which the Comons of Fraunce do not, nor may do; for thay have no wepon, nor armor, nor good to bye it withall. To thees maner of men, may be said with the Philosopher, *Ad parva respicientes, de facili enunciant;* that is to say, thay that seen fewe thyngs, woll sone say their advyse. Forsothe thoos folkys consyderyn litil the good of the realme of England, whereof the might most stondith upon Archers, which be no rich men. And if thay were made porer than they be, they schuld not have wherewith to bye them bowys, arrowes, jakkes, or any other armor of defence, whereby they might be able to resyste, our enymyes, whan thay liste to come upon us, which they

may do on every syde, consydering that we be en Ileland, and as it ys said before, we may not have sone socors off any other realme.

TRANSLATION :

Some men have said, that it were good for the king, that the commons of England were made poor, as are the commons of France. For then they would not rebel, as now they do oftentimes, which the commons of France do not, nor may do; for they have no weapons, nor armour, nor good to buy it withal. To these manner of men may be said, with the philosopher, *Ad parva respicientes, de facili enunciant;* that is to say, they that see few things will soon say their advice. Forsooth those folks consider little the good of the realm, whereof the might most stands upon Archers, who are no rich men. And if they vere made poorer than they are, they should not have wherewith to buy them bows, arrows, jackets (of chain armour), or any other armour of defence, whereby they might be able to resist our enemies, when they list to come upon us, which they may do on every side, considering that we are an island, and, as it is said before, we may not have soon succours of any other realm.

10. — Passing over Fortescue, the first prose writer who blended just and striking thought with his language, and was entitled to the appellation of a man of genius, was unquestionably **Sir Thomas More,** the celebrated chancellor of Henry VIII. (1480-1535). He was an admirer of Erasmus, and followed his example : he wrote his most famous work in Latin. This was the *Utopia,* 1516, translated afterwards, 1551, by Ralph Ro-

binson. It tells us more of the curiosity the new learning had awakened in Englishmen concerning all the problems of life, society, government, and religion, than any other book of the time. It is the representative book of that period which we call *English Renaissance before the Reformation.* Its design was no doubt suggested by the *Atlantis* of Plato. The intention of Sir Thomas More is to set forth his idea of those social arrangements whereby the happiness and improvement of the people may be secured to the utmost extent of which human nature is susceptible. In his imaginary island, all are contented with the necessaries of life; all are employed in useful labour; no man desires, in clothing, any other quality besides durability, and since wants are few, and every individual engages in labour, there is no need for working more than six hours a day. Experience proves that many of More's suggestions are indeed *Utopian*; but there are many others which we cannot but think very sound. Thus, instead of severe punishment of theft, the author would improve the morals and condition of the people, so as to take away the temptation to crime; for, says he, "if you suffer your people to be ill-educated, and their manners to be corrupted from their infancy, an then punish them for those crimes to which

their first education disposed them, what else is to be concluded from this, but that you first make thieves, and then punish them?" It is striking, perhaps humiliating to modern pride of enlightenment to hear the chancellor of Henry the Eighth urging the education of the people, and asserting solemnly that it is better to prevent crime than to punish it.

Thomas More wrote in the English language *A History of Edward V. and of his Brother, and of Richard III.*, which Hallam considers as the first English prose work free of vulgarisms and pedantry. His *Dialogue concerning Heresies* led him into a hot contest with Tyndale. He adhered to the catholic faith, and proved his sincerity by dying for it. His death on the scoffold forms one of the most moving and pathetic scenes in English history.

It is curious to read the advice More gave to his children for good style: —

... But this I admonish you to do; that, whether you write of serious matters or of trifles, you write with diligence and consideration, premeditating of it before... I enjoin you, by all means, that you diligently examine what you have written before you write it over fair again; first considering attentively the whole sentence, and after examine every part thereof; by which means you may easily find out if any solecisms have escaped you; which being put out

and your letter written fair, yet then let it not also trouble you to examine it over again; for sometimes the same faults creep in at the second writing, which you before had blotted out. By this your diligence you will procure, that those your trifles will seem serious matters. For, as nothing is so pleasing but may be made unsavoury by prating garrulity, so nothing is by nature so unpleasant, that by industry may not be made full of grace and pleasantness.

In the preceding passage the spelling is modernized; in the folloving one, More's language is kept unchanged.

PORTRAIT OF RICHARD III :

Richarde, the thirde sonne of Richarde, Duke of York, was in witt and courage egall with his two brothers, in bodye and prowesse farre under them bothe; little of stature, ill fetured of limmes, croke backed, his left shoulder much higher than his right, hard fauoured of visage..... He was malicious, wrathfull, enuious, and from afore his birth, euer frowarde, etc.

This portrait reminds us of that drawn in Shakespeare's *Richard III.*

11. — When speaking of sir Thomas More, we cannot help adding a word about **John Fisher**, bishop of Rochester (1459-1535), chiefly distinguished by writings in Latin against the Lutheran doctrines. His English writings consist of sermons, and a few small religious tracts. He was, as well as More, a steadfast adherent of the Church of Rome. While a prisoner in the Tower, the Pope

acknowledged his worth and consistency by the gift of a cardinal's hat, which drew from Henry the brutal remark : " Well, let the Pope send him a hat when he will; mother of God! he shall wear it on his shoulders then, for I will leave him never a head to set it on. "

12. — Another famous victim of Henry the Eighth's tyranny was More's virulent opponent, **William Tyndale** (1500-1536), a clergyman of great learning. He translated the New Testament, the first edition of which was printed in 1527, partly at Cologne and partly at Worms. He translated also the first five books of the Old Testament, called the Pentateuch, the publication of which was completed in 1530.

Tyndale's translation of the New Testament is admirable both for style and accuracy; and the English protestant authorized version has throughout very closely followed it. It is astonishing how little obsolete the language of it is, even at this day. As a specimen, we transcribe the Lord's Prayer :

Oure Father which arte in heven, halowed be thy name. Let thy kingdom come. Thy will be fulfilled, as well in erth, as hit ys in heven. Geve vs this daye our dayly breade. And forgeve vs oure treaspases, even as we forgeve them which treaspas vs. Leede vs not into temptacion, but delyvre vs from yvell. Amen.

13. — Among the authors on whom the influence of the revival of learning was most sensible, there is to be mentioned **Roger Ascham**, reader in the learned languages to Elisabeth. He was born in 1515 and died in 1568; some of his works were written before, some after, the close of our period, viz., *English Renaissance before the Reformation*. The form of his *Toxophilus* and his *Schoolsmaster* is adopted from classical models.

The *Toxophilus* or *School of Shooting* is a treatise on archery, an art which even then beginning to be superseded in warfare, had not yet lost all the importance it possessed when the English bowmen thinned the French ranks at Agincourt. The work is a dialogue in two books, sustained with much liveliness of tone, as well as discrimination of character, between Philologus, a student, and Toxophilus, a lover of archery.

There is much greater value in the matter, but considerably less liveliness in the composition of Ascham's most celebrated work, *The Schoolmaster*, a treatise on education. Two passages of it deserve, fort different reasons, special remembrance. In the one, the writer deals with the versification of the modern languages. He vehemently condemns rhyme as barbarous, urging a return to the unrhymed measures of the ancients. He quotes

Cheke, a Hellenist of his time, holding "that our rude beggarly rhyming was brought into Italy by Gothes and Hunnes"; and that "to follow rather the Gothes in rhyming than the Greekes in trew versifying, were even to eate acornes with swyne, when we might freely eate wheate bread amonges men." He recommends as a model for English rhythm, the recent versification of Lord Surrey, that is, the blank verse, unquestionably the finest of the English metrical forms.

The other passage is one which is very well known. Ascham relates in it how, visiting his pupil Lady Jane Grey in Leicestershire, he found her reading Plato in the original Greek, while her parents and her household were hunting in the park. The learning of this unfortunate lady, that of Queen Elizabeth herself, and the similar pains bestowed by Sir Thomas More on the instruction of his daughters, are striking examples of education reaching up to a very high point among English ladies during the sixteenth century. We must not suffer, however, ourselves to be deluded into the belief that those ladies were more accomplished women than many who now are living. In the time of Henry the Eighth and Edward the Sixth, a person who did not read Greek and Latin could read nothing. All the valuable books then

extant in all the vernacular dialects of Europe would hardly have filled a single shelf. In looking round a well-furnished library, how many English or French books can we find which were extant when Lady Jane Grey and Queen Elizabeth received their education? Chaucer, Gower, Froissart, Commines, Rabelais, nearly complete the list. England did not yet possess Shakespeare's plays and the Fairy Queen, nor France Montaigne's Essays. This is no longer the case. If our ladies cannot enjoy the delicious dialogues of Plato, they may find some compensation in those of Fénelon.

It is just to say that Roger Ascham owed much to Henry the Eighth's protection. It was the king to whom he dedicated his first work, the *Toxophilus*, and who sent him abroad to pursue his studies. Towards the close of the reign of this prince two celebrated Hellenists, Sir John Cheke and Sir Thomas Smith were especially active in promoting the study of Greek at Cambridge, which thus followed the example of Oxford.

14. The Renaissance in England before the Elizabethan period underwent various vicissitudes. In an age of strange excitement such as that of the revival of learning, there was a temporary forgetfulness, on the part even of many holding

high office in the church, that this life, dignify it as you may, is, after all, a scene of trial, not of triumph. The Reformers seized on this weak point then noticeable in many of the clergy, and proclaimed that unchequered enjoyment is not the ideal towards wich man should aspire. In Germany Luther originated the cry, that human learning was a waste of time as well as a dangerous snare, that art was a mean pandering to the passions, that sinful man should be engrossed by one pursuit, the pursuit of salvation, should study one book, and that the Bible. When in England the party that favoured Reformation came into power under Edward VI., ecclesiastical commissioners were sent to Oxford, and there destroyed or removed a valuable collection, impossible to be replaced, of six hundred manuscripts of the classical authors, presented by the good duke of Gloucester. About the middle of the sixteenth century, many members of the catholic hierarchy saw reason to change their tactics. Under Queen Mary the bishops discouraged the study of the Humanities. Cardinal Pole, the legate, however, remained favourable to the new learning. But one enlightened and generous mind could not restrain a reactionary violence. The universities began to sink in a low depth of ignorance; the Greek poets and phi-

losophers were banished, and in their place were revived the scholastic exercises and disputations. The reformers then opposed, and raised the cry, " You are trying to shut out enlightenment, to set up the barbarous scholastic, in preference to the Ciceronian Latinity, you are enemies of progress, of civilization, of the enlargement of the mind." Thus the struggle for books mingled with the struggle for religion; finally the battle was won by the Greek and Latin authors, who became the classical authors.

CHAPTER VI

The Elizabethan age
(1558-1625)

PROSE WRITERS OF THIS PERIOD

1. — The most brilliant period in the history of English literature is the latter portion of the reign of Queen Elizabeth and the reign of her successor, James I. We shall devote two chapters to this age, and make our readers acquainted first with the principal prose writers, and then with the poets.

Among the best prose writers may be placed some of the defenders of the Reformation or the Anglican Church. They were the successors of the leaders in the latter part of the reign of Henry VIII. and in that of Edward VI., such as Archbishop Cranmer (1489-1556), Bishop Latimer (1490-1555), and others; the two most remarkable were John Foxe and Richard Hooker,

John Foxe (1517-1587) lived as a divine at Oxford; having become a convert to protestantism, he was, in 1545, expelled from his college. He published, in 1561, the *Acts and Monuments,* commonly called the *Book of Martyrs.* This work was received with great favour by the Protestants, but was bitterly assailed by the Roman Catholics. The style is manly, the language vigorous. Thrilling narratives of the persecutions and burnings of the Protestants under Mary greatly contributed to weaken the hold of the ancient Church on English hearts in general. Yet Foxe was extremely credu lous and delighted in all slanderous reports, that could be used as weapons against Catholic prelates. In his account of the death of Wolsey we read that " his body was black as pitch, and so heavie that six could scarce beare it. Furthermore, it did so stinke above the ground that they were constrained to hasten the burial thereof in the night season

before it was day." Many pages are sullied with such coarse language.

Richard Hooker (1553-1600) was the principal champion of the Anglican Church. The general object of his great work, *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, was to defend the Established Church, its laws, rites, and ceremonies, from the attacks of the Puritans. His life by Izaak Walton (1593-1683), the author of *The Complete Angler*, is one of the most popular English biographies.

2.—**Sir Philip Sidney** (1554-1586) takes his rank in English literary history rather as a prose writer than as a poet. His sonnets, songs, and canzonets, imitated from Italian and Spanish models, are of little value. His romance of *Arcadia*, on the contrary, is a work remarkable for the richness and beauty of its descriptions. It was so universally read and admired that, first published in 1613, it reached in 1633 an eighth edition. It had been written about 1584. It may be described as the record of the two friends, Pyrocles and Musidorus, while aspiring to the love of the princesses of Arcadia, Philoclea and Pamela. The romantic incidents, from time to time somewhat tedious, are narrated in prose, with pieces of verse interspersed.

Sidney wrote also in prose the *Defence of Poesie*, decidedly superior to his *Arcadia*.

3. — **John Lyly** (1554-1603) may be reckoned as a dramatist; but he is more celebrated for his romance—*Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit,* and *Euphues and his England.* In the first part the author places his hero, a young Athenian, in Naples; and in the second part, brings him to England. First the work is full of what we now call *chauvinism* : Englishmen and English ladies only are loved by God for their virtues : — " Oh fortunate people!" Lyly exclaims; " the lyving God is onely the English God;" the men of other nations " never thinke that they have dyned till they be dronken ;" the gentlewomen of Greece and Italy use " sonets for psalmes, and pastimes for prayers. " Then it is tainted with a peculiar kind of affected language, which is known in English literature by the name of *Euphuism.* This is what we call in France *le style précieux* in the seventeenth century, and *le marivaudage* in the eighteenth.

4.—**Francis Bacon** (1561-1626) is the greatest of English philosophers. He became Lord Chancellor of England in 1618. In the spring of 1621, the House of Commons accused him of bribery, and he was condemned to pay a large fine, to lose his office, and to be banished from court. One cannot apply to Bacon the beautiful line of our Andrieux for Ducis :

L'accord d'un grand talent et d'un beau caractère,

He had a mind of depth and acuteness, and a soul full of meanness and vulgarity.

In his *History of the Reign of Henry VII.*, he seeks to trace out and exhibit the causes and connections of events, and hence approaches to the modern conception of history. His *Essays*, short papers on a great variety of subjects, are still universally studied. He gave the title of *Instauratio Magna* to a philosophical work in six parts, three of which only were finished. Most of these writings appeared both in English and in Latin. Bacon's aim in all his study was to improve the lot of man, and lessen his burden. This is the meaning of the well-known Baconian axiom, *Knowledge is power*.

5.—Sir **Walter Raleigh** (1552-1618), besides being a soldier, sailor, courtier and adventurous colonizer of barbarous countries, was also a poet and historian. Committed to the Tower, where he remained for nearly thirteen years, he there wrote the chief portion of his works, especially the *History of the World*, which he brought from the Creation down to the end of the second Macedonian War, B. C. 170. That there are eloquent and stirring pages in the book, no one will deny; but it has certainly been overpraised. It is full of uncritical learning, and is didactic rather than expository; the narrative of events becomes a sort of preaching,

as if the proper office of history were to teach moral lessons.

6.—We should pass over in silence **Raphael Holinshed** (died about the year 1582), had not his *Chronicles of Englande, Scotlande and Irelande* found a diligent reader in Shakespeare, who drew from that source materials for Henry IV. and for his other historical plays. It was even from Holinshed that the great dramatist derived the groundwork of his tragedies of *Cymbeline, King Lear* and *Macbeth*. The chronicler worked upon the foundation laid by **Reginald Wolfe**, and was assisted, besides, by **William Harrisson, Richard Honihurst, John Hooker**, and other writers. There is in his histories a total absence of critical spirit. For instance, several emancipators of literature and taste had expressed many years before him disbelief in the fable of Brute, the great-grandson of Aeneas; yet the credulous chronicler makes him still the founder of the British monarchy, and no more doubts his existence, or that from him comes the name of Britain, than he doubts that Elizabeth succeeded Mary.

7. — In the same case as Holinshed is **Robert Burton** (1576-1640), who would have been quite forgotten, had it not been discovered that Laurence

Sterne (1713-1768) had borrowed largely from his *Anatomy of Melancholy*. This book is an undigested farrago, attempting to complete a design which the Greek philosopher Democritus is recorded to have entertained — that of writing a scientific treatise on melancholy. For patient readers, it is a very storehouse of quaintly original ideas. It delighted Dr Johnson so much, that he said this "was the only book that ever took him out of bed two hours sooner than he wished to rise."

8.—A few Scottish authors contributed to illustrate the Elizabethan period. Among them the most famous one was **George Buchanan** (1506-1581). His principal work relates to political science; though it is in Latin, it deserves mention even in a short history of English literature.

The doctrines of civil freedom were not wholly new when Buchanan published, in 1579, his *De Jure Regni apud Scotos*. As far back as the middle of the thirteenth century, St. Thomas of Aquin had said that princes of the earth were intrusted with power by God, that they might seek not their own ends, but the common good of their subjects; that it is unlawful to tax the people to meet inordinate outlays, or for the lust of personal gain; that the king exists for the sake of the kingdom, not the kingdom for the sake of the king.

Such views, after the invention of printing and the revival of learning, were taken up by many thinkers in different parts of Europe, and rapidly circulated through the educated portion of society. Buchanan's treatise, so to say, embodied the circulating ideas on the origin and nature of royal authority in general, and then applied them to the authority of the Scottish crown in particular. It contains views so extreme as to declare a tyrant to be justly put to death by his people, and that not by public sentence only, but by the act of any private person.

Buchanan wrote Latin poems and made a version of the Psalms. Having removed to France because of the religious hatred which had arisen against him in his own country, he was successively professor of Latin at Bordeaux and Paris, and in both cities made himself known by his teaching of the Roman tongue with a purity which it had seldom been made to wear by a modern pen. It is to be regretted that his character was not a noble one. When Mary, Queen of Scots, was in the twentieth year of her age, she had him as classical tutor and was eulogized by him in verse; when rebellion prevailed, she found him in the commission constituted against her, as an active coadjutor and a stern critic.

9. — As the English people are diligent Bible readers, the tongue of the Holy Scriptures has had for three centuries a great influence on the English language and literature. It is necessary, in consequence, to say something of the translations of the Bible.

Wyclif's translation (begun about 1380) had as much influence in fixing the English language as the work of Chaucer. About a century and a half later on (1527) William Tyndale's *Translation of the New Testament* fixed the standard English once for all. In the early part of Elizabeth's reign, under the supervision of Archbishop Parker was prepared *The Bishop's Bible* (published in 1567). The authorized English version of the Scriptures was begun under James I., in 1607; four years were necessary to complete the work. Forty-seven scholars distributed the labour among them. This translation appeared in 1611. It is the richest specimen of the beauty and force of the Saxon element in the English language. In much of it, only one word in forty is not Saxon. For instance, in five verses of Genesis (XLIII. 25-29), out of 130 words, 5 only are not Anglo-Saxon. There is, besides that richness of Saxon words, in the authorized version a beautiful simplicity, an easy idiomatic flow, and a remarkable strength and dignity of style.

10. — The authorized English version is for the use of the Protestants. The English Roman Catholics have a Bible in the vernacular tongue translated from the Latin Vulgate and approved by the bishops of England and Ireland. This version was made under the following circumstances.

In Elizabeth's reign, the minority in England who adhered to the ancient faith became the victims of an organized system of persecution and plunder. Their scholars, driven from the universities, went abroad and founded English colleges for the education of priests at Rome and Douay. Among them was **Cardinal Allen** (1532-1594), who first settled at Douay, then was forced by potitical events to transfer his college to Rheims. In these two cities the Bible was published in two parts : the New Testament at Rheims (1582), and the Old Testament at Douay (1609), when the college had been again established there (1593). In the eighteenth century Bishop Challoner (1691-1781) revised both the Old and the New Testament. Thus was made a version of the Bible which has justly been called, for its fidelity and exactness, an inestimable treasure to English Catholics.

11. — The Bible is not only an inexhaustible source of poetry; it is full of splendid thoughts even for prose writers. English literature could

neither be understood nor appreciated by any one unacquainted with the Bible. Even some of the best French writers owe their most striking pages to the Scriptures. Who does not know the beautiful descriptions of the horse in Buffon and Châteaubriand? Both are taken from the Book of Job, XXXIX. 19-25 :

Wilt thou give strength to the horse, or clothe his neck with neighing? Wilt thou lift him up like the locusts? the glory of his nostrils is terror? He breaketh up the earth with his hoof, he pranceth boldly, he goeth forward to meet armed men. He despiseth fear, he turneth not his back to the sword. Above him shall the quiver rattle, the spear and shield shall glitter. Chafing and raging he swalloweth the ground, neither doth he make account when the noise of the trumpet soundeth. When he heareth the trumpet he saith : Ha, ha : he smelleth the battle afar off, the encouraging of the captains, and the shouting of the army (1).

12.—We conclude this chapter with the name of the king to whose death it carries on the history of English prose writing. **James I.** was ambitious of the fame of an author, and prided himself on his theological profundity. His treatise on *Daemono-*

(1) « ..... Ce fier et fougueux animal qui partage avec lui (l'homme) les fatigues de la guerre et la gloire des combats : aussi intrépide que son maître, le cheval voit le péril et l'affronte; il se fait au bruit des armes, il l'aime, il le cherche, et s'anime de la même ardeur. » (Buffon.)

« J'ai souvent admiré un cheval arabe enchaîné dans le sable brûlant, les crins descendant épars, la tête baissée

logy is often cited : in it he assumes the reality and discusses the conditions of the Satanic agency which operates in witches. His tract against the new practice of smoking, entitled, *A Counterblast against Tobacco,* would be read both with pleasure and interest by the modern societies which have arisen in every country against the abuse of tobacco. This plant had been brought to England in 1586, not by Raleigh himself, but by a certain Ralph Lane, a person employed in one of the exploring expeditions fitted out by Raleigh. Civilized people in a short time became more addicted to smoking than the savages of America. In his *Counterblast,* James states that many of the nobles and gentry spent three or four hundred pounds (7,500 and 10,000 francs) a year on tobacco. He concludes his work with these emphatic words : "Smoking is a custom loathsome to the eye, hateful to the nose, dangerous to the lungs, and in the black fumes thereof nearest resembling the horrible Stygian smoke of the pit that is bottomless."

entre ses jambes pour trouver un peu d'ombre, et laissant tomber de son œil sauvage un regard oblique sur son maître. Avez-vous dégagé ses pieds des entraves, vous êtes-vous élancé sur son dos, il écume, il frémit, il dévore la terre ; la trompette sonne, il dit : Allons ! et vous reconnaissez le cheval de Job. » (Châteaubriand.)

CHAPTER VII

The Elizabethan age
(1558-1625)

POETS OF THIS PERIOD

1.—The poets of the Elizabethan Period may be divided into two classes, first those who wrote but little or nothing for the stage, and secondly those who are called dramatic poets or dramatists. The former class has neither so many representatives nor such famous works to boast of as the latter. There are names, however, which demand notice even in the shortest history of literature. Of these **Thomas Sackville** (1536-1600), better known as Lord Buckhurst and Earl of Dorset, is one of the chief; he will again come before us in the character of a dramatic writer.

He formed the plan of a set of poems printed in 1559 with the following title :—"*A Myrrovre for Magistrates,* Wherein may be seen by example of others, with how greuous plages vices are punished, and howe frayl and vnstable worldly prosperitie is founde, euen of those whom Fortvne seemeth most highly to favour. Felix quem faciunt aliena peri-

cula cautum." A *Mirror* was a favourite title of a book (1), especially among the old French writers: *Miroir* des Pécheurs (1468), *Miroir* de la Rédemption humaine (1482), *Miroir* de l'Ame pécheresse (1531), *Miroir* français (1598), etc. In Germany the word *Spiegel* has the same signification, and is found in *Eulenspiegel*, *Sachsenspiegel*, *Schwabenspiegel*, etc. The *Mirror of Magistrates* celebrates unfortunate but illustrious men who figure in English history. The plan was borrowed from Baccaccio's *De Casibus Virorum et Feminarum illustrium*, a book translated, as we have seen, by Lydgate, but which never was popular, because it had no English examples. Sackville himself supplied only the *Induction*, and *The Complaynt of Henrye Duke of Buckingham* (beheaded in 1483). These were not inserted in the first edition. The rest was written by less noteworthy poets, such as Richard Baldwin, George Ferrers, and others. The work has fallen into oblivion, and the only part worthy of preservation is the *Induction* and *Complaint* of the original author of the design.

2. — The *Mirror of Magistrates*, in its better part, is a link which unites Chaucer and Lydgate

(1) See ante, ch. II, § 6, *Speculum Stultorum*.

with **Edmund Spenser** (1553-1599). This poet first tried his talent in composing pastoral romances, which were then the fashion. His *Shepherd's Calendar* appeared in 1579. It consists of twelve eclogues, which are imitations, so far as their form is concerned, of the pastoral poetry of Theocritus and Virgil; but in a few of them more serious themes are handled, — in the fifth, seventh, and ninth, for instance, the abuses both of the old and the new Church are discussed.

Spenser owes his glory especially to his great work, *The Faerie Queene* (la Reine des Fées). Out of the twelve books which ought to compose this poem, we have but six in an entire state, the three first of which appeared in 1590, and the three others in 1596. *The Faerie Queene* is an allegorical epic poem, solemn and serious in tone. It is founded on the legends of king Arthur. The Fairy Queen, Gloriana, intended to represent Queen Elizabeth, is finally to be won by king Arthur, the impersonation of all manly virtues. The poem is written in the so called Spenserian stanza, formed of nine rhymed lines, the ninth line being of twelve, instead of, as in the others, ten syllables.

Spenser develops in the allegories of *the Faerie Queene* a wonderful fertility of imagination with a great depth and nobility of feeling; he is in

many places a true poet. For the fine flush in the colours of his language he deserves to be called the *Rubens of English poetry*. But his epos is rather tedious, because of the monotony of the characters and of the adventures, which generally consist of combats between Knights and monsters, giants or wicked enchanters, in which the Knights generally come off victorious.

Of the many shorter poems left by Spenser, none is more noteworthy than the lovely nuptial hymn, *Epithalamion*, written on the occasion of his marriage with his beloved wife, *the fair Elizabeth;* its metre and movement are Pindaric.

Spenser has become the master of a celebrated school by the pathos and richness of his strains, and the enlarged dimensions of grace, which he gave to English poetry. He is the poetical father of a Milton and a Thomson. Gray habitually read him when he wished to frame his thoughts for composition. He deemed himself the poetical son of Chaucer, and adopted his diction, giving new force to old withered words. So Virgil gave simplicity and venerableness to the Aeneid, by using words taken from Ennius; so also La Fontaine gave freshness to his satire by borrowing expressions from Rabelais.

3. — The works of a crowd of poets of the se-

cond rank certify the great intellectual activity which pervaded the English nation in the Elizabethan period. Among these one of the most remarkable is **Samuel Daniel** (1562-1619). His finest piece is his *Musophilus*. It is in the form of a dialogue between Philocosmus (a lover of the world) and Musophilus (a lover of the Muse). The man of the world is disposed to ridicule and contemn the pursuits of men of letters, and the poet himself. The lover of the Muse defends poetry; hear how finely he replies to an objection to its cultivation, from the small number of those who cared for it :

And, for my part, if only one allow
The care my labouring spirits take in this,
He is to me a theatre large enow,
And his applause only sufficient is ;
All my respect is bent but to his brow;
That is my all, and all I am is his.

By contemporary critics Daniel is spoken of as the *polisher and purifier of the English tongue*. His style is certainly the clearest and purest of his age; but he wants force and life, and his verse is in consequence but little read. This defect is very sensible in his poem entitled *History of the Civil Wars*, a heavy, lifeless production, in which there are innumerable descriptions of men's motives and plans, but not one description of a battle.

4. — A poet of greater reach of mind than Daniel was **Michael Drayton** (1563-1631). Besides many minor compositions, he is the author of two works of great length, the *Barons' Wars* and *Polyolbion*. The former, on the subject of the civil wars of the reign of Edward II., contains passages of beauty which have been imitated by Milton; it is full of action and strife; swords flash and helmets rattle on every page. It iss less important, however, than the *Polyolbion*, a poetical celebration of the topography and the natural beauties of England. The information this contains — legendary, historical and topographical — is in general so accurate that the work has often been quoted as an authority. The whole consists of thirty books and extends to thirty thousand lines; this length is one of the causes why, if well known by name, it is little known beyond that. Englishmen now learn such information as it gives, more readily in prose than in verse, and foreigners find but little interest in minute descriptions of places they do not know.

Sir **Philip Sidney**, whom we have aleready met with as a prose writer, was also a poet. He is the author of *Astrophel and Stella*, consisting of a great number of love sonnets, with songs interspersed. Astrophel is Sidney; by Stella Lady Rich was meant, a leading beauty in Elizabeth's corrupt court.

As lady Rich was married, Sidney's passion is a stain on his character.

It would be of little interest for French readers to prolong the list of poets of the second rank in a chapter in which Shakspeare is to be spoken of. We, therefore, pass on to the drama, and will endeavour to come as quickly as possible to the prince of dramatists.

5. — When historians of literature say that the drama had its origin in religion in England, France, Germany, and other countries, it is to be understood that they speak of the serious drama, not of the comedy. The latter has its origin rather in old merry-makings of the people, and may be traced back as far as the times of paganism. At all events we know that comic performances took place during the fairs and great marts established in England by William the Conqueror, as they had been in France by Charlemagne. The merchants, who frequented these fairs in numerous caravans or companies, employed every art to draw the people together; they were, therefore, accompanied by jugglers, minstrels, and buffoons, who were no less interested in giving their attendance, and exerting all their skill, on these occasions. Thus the fair-time was the season for diversion, just as it is still in our small country towns.

The serious drama takes its rise in religion. In early times, uneducated men were instructed in the history of the Bible, the Christian faith, the lives of the Saints and Martyrs, by monks and priests, who instead of preaching to the ears represented to the eyes, facts which they wished to inculcate. The earliest forms of those representations were the *Mystery* and the *Miracle Play*. The *Mystery* was a representation of any portion of the New Testament history concerned with a mysterious subject, such as the Incarnation, the Atonement, or the Resurrection; the *Miracle Play* was a representation of some portion of Scripture history, or of the life of some Saint of the Church. Plays of both kinds were common in Chaucer's time : the wife of Bath went to *plays of miracles*. Besides the clergy, scholars and students were often performers; by degrees the town guilds took the plays into their hands, and introduced some comic element to attract and amuse the people; the Devil generally played the part of the clown or jester. In this state, the plays were acted out of the churches, on public places; the stage was a kind of graduated platform in three divisions rising one above the other, and representing Heaven, Earth, and Hell. Sometimes the stage was movable on wheels; such travelling show-

ordinarily rough, but homely. The following passage taken from the celebrated *Coventry Mysteries*, of which the probable date is 1468, presents a fair sample of that roughness of style and homeliness of conception which characterize this kind of plays; it relates to the Temptation, St. Matthew, IV. 6-7:—

Now if thou be Goddys Sone of might,
  Ryght down to the erthe anon thou falle,
And save thisylf in every plyght
  From harm and hurt and peinys alle;
For it is wretyn, aungelys bright
  That ben in hevyn, thy faderes halle,
Thee to kepe bothe day and nyght,
Xal be ful redy as thi tharalle,
Hurt that thou not have:
That thou stomele not ageyn the stone,
  And hurt thi fote as thou dost gon,
  Aungelle be ready all everychon
  In weyes thee to save.

It is wretyn in holy book,
Thi Lord Got thou shalt not tempte;
All things must obey to Goddys look,
Out of His might is non exempt;
Out of thi cursydness and cruel crook
  By Godys grace man xal be redempt;
Whan thou to helle, thi brennynge brooke,
To endles peyne xal evyn be dempt.
  Therein alwey to abyde. etc., etc.

TRANSLATION:

Now if thou be the mighty Son of God,— Straight down to the earth immediately fall, — And save thyself in every

state — From all harm, and hurt, and pain; — For it is written, bright angels — That are in heaven, thy Father's hall, — To keep thee both day and night, — Shall be full ready as the thrall (1), — That thou have no hurt : — That thou stumble not against the stone, — And hurt thy foot as thou dost go, — Angels be ready all everyone — In ways to save thee.

It is written in holy Scripture,— Thy Lord God thou shalt not tempt; — All things must obey to God's look, — Out ot his might none is exempt; — Out of the cursedness and cruel crookedness (2) — By God's grace man shall be redeemed; — When thou to hell, the burning brook, — To endless pain shalt even be condemned, — Therein always to abide. etc., etc.

7.—We now have to speak of the beginning of the modern drama, of pieces made upon the models of ancient authors. The earliest known English comedy is *Ralph Roister Doister*, written by **Nicholas Udall** before 1551, and first printed in 1566. It was modelled on the comedies of Plautus and Terence, and was intended to expose the folly of *vain gloriousness*. Udall was Master of Eton College, and wrote this amusing interlude for his scholars. The hero is a young fop, who imagines every woman to be in love with him, and who gets into all sorts of absurd and humiliating scrapes. A *roister-doister* was used proverbially for a hare-

(1) Slave, *serf.*
(2) Sinfulness.

brained fellow. The word *roister* is evidently from the French *rustre*. Udall's comedy is composed throughout in rhyming couplets, and is divided into acts and scenes.

8.—Bishop **Still**'s *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, composed before 1560, is a comedy of the same kind. It is founded on the circumstance of an old woman having lost her needle, which throws the whole village into confusion; it was a loss comparatively serious when needles were rare and costly. At last the unfortunate needle is found just in the place where it might have been expected to be, that is in the garment of Hodge, the husband of the old woman, for the mending of which it had been used. This play shows some knowledge of construction, and some discrimination of character; but the humour is coarse and the workmanship rude. The best passage is a drink-ballad, the first *chanson à boire* of any merit in English; it opens the second act, and begins thus :

I cannot eat but little meat,
My stomach is not good;
But sure I think that I can drink
With him that wears a hood.
Though I go bare, take ye no care,
I nothing am a colde;
I stuffe my skin so full within,
Of joly goode ale and olde.

Chorus. Bake and side go bare, go bare,
Both foot and hand go colde :
But, belly, God send thee good ale inoughe,
Whether it be new ar olde (1) !

The metre of *Gammer Gurton's Needle* is the same as that of *Ralph Roister Doister*, the object of the writers evidently being to imitate Plautus and Terence. This imitation, however, shows a genius less flexible than the French genius of the same period; the English poets had not sense enough to do what our Du Bellay said, when writing in the year 1548 : " Translation is not a sufficient means to elevate our vernarcular speech to the level of the most famous languages. What must we do then? Imitate ! imitate the Romans as they imitated the Greeks; as Cicero imitated Demosthenes, and Virgil Homer. We must transform the best authors into ourselves, and after having digested them, convert them into blood and nutriment. "

9. — The earliest known tragedy was brought upon the stage in 1562, under the title of *Gorboduc* or *Ferrex and Porrex;* it was acted before Queen Elizabeth at Whitehall. The first three acts were written by **Thomas Norton** a Puritan lawyer,

(1) See the whole song in W. Irving's Sketch Book, *Little Britain.*

and the other two by Sackville, who formed the plan of *A Myrrovre for Magistrates*. Its object is to set forth the blessings of peace and settled government, the folly of popular risings, the evils of a doubtful succession, etc. The subject, like that of Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* and *King Lear*, is taken from Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Britonum*. Gorboduc is King of Britain; Ferrex and Porrex are his sons, after whom the play is sometimes called. The tragedy is in five acts, each of which opens with a masque or dumb show, and closes with some utterance by the chorus; as it appears, some of the more useful rules of the classic drama of antiquity are observed. *Gorboduc* was the first tragedy in which blank verse, recently introduced into the English language by the Earl of Surrey, was applied to dramatic composition. Many lines are very beautiful in style and sentiment. The two following have been noted :

> For right will alwayes live, and rise at length,
> But wrong can never take deepe roote to last.

This is a much nobler and higher thought than the, " la force prime le droit ".

10.—The thirty years that elapsed between the publication of *Gorboduc* (1562) and the age of Shakespeare, showed a great improvement in the

drama. There were a number of dramatists who are considered as the forerunners of Shakespeare : **George Peele** (1558-1598), who wrote *Edward the First, David and Bethsabe, and Absalom,* etc.; **Robert Greene** (1550-1592), whose best tragedy is *Orlando Furioso,* and best comedy *Friar Bacon;* **Thomas Nash** (1567-1600), who amused the town with his fierce attacks upon Gabriel Harvey (Spenser's friend) and on the Puritans; and **Christopher Marlowe** (1568-1593), by far the most powerful genius among the dramatists, who immediately preceded Shakespeare. His mode of life, it is true, was remarkable for vice; he came to an early and singularly unhappy end, being stabbed in a scuffle in a tavern. At college (Cambridge) he wrote his *Tamburlaine* (*Tamerlan*), the success of which induced him to go to London. The sounding and lofty blank verse used in this play, was definitively qualified to give full effect to dramatic sentiment. Better works are his dramas *Edward II.*, and *The Life and Death of Doctor Faustus.* The latter is founded upon the very same popular legend that Goethe adopted as the groundwork of his tragedy; but the English drama contains no trace of the profound self-questioning of the German hero, and of the extraordinary creation of Mephistopheles. The witch

element is also entirely absent. But, on the other hand, there is certainly no passage in the tragedy of Goethe in which terror, despair and remorse are pointed with such a powerful hand, as in the great closing scene of Marlowe's piece, when Faustus, after the twenty-four years of pleasure which were stipulated in his compact with the Evil One, is waiting for the inevitable arrival of the fiend to claim his bargain. This is truly dramatic, and is one of the most impressive scenes that ever were placed upon the stage. *Edward II.* is superior to *Faustus*; it was the last of Marlowe's dramas, and showed that in some departments of his art, particularly in that of moving terror and pity, he might, had he lived, have become no insignificant rival of Shakespeare himself.

11. — The known facts of **Shakespeare**'s biography are few and meagre; his name, as well as that of Homer, is to us little more than a name, and it is not easy to give a distinct historic personality to him. He was born at Stratford-on-Avon (Warwick) in 1564. His father, John Sakespeare, is said to have been a glover, or a butcher, or rather a wool-comber; his mother, Mary Arden, was descended from an old family. He was the eldest of six children. It is generally believed that he received no better education than the grammar

school of Stratford afforded, and that, his father having gradually descended to a condition of comparative poverty, he was obliged to help him in his business. Thus he knew little Latin and less Greek, and had no time, when a youth, to read many books. If it is true that afterwards he studied law, he must have laboured very much and made up for lost time, for from the general tenor of his works it is certain that he was well-read in the mythology of the ancients and in classic and ecclesiastical history as well as in the history of later times. At all events he knew a book superior to all books, that of nature and the hearts of men. When not fully eighteen years old, he married Anne Hathaway, who gave him three children. His married life was not a satisfactory one. Having left Stratford, he went to London and lived there, paying only short visits to his family. Various companies of players had visited Stratford in their summer peregrinations; the greatest tragic actor of that day, Richard Burbage, was a Warwickshire man. Through his influence, Shakespeare was drawn into the company of the Globe, then the first theatre in London. This company were also the proprietors of the Blackfriars Theatre. There Shakespeare was reckoned among Her Majesty's poor players, and at first was the twelfth on a list

of sixteen (1589). He soon became one of the most remarkable actors of plays, and at the same time engaged in altering old dramas and writing several independent ones, to be performed by his company. He prospered in his profession, and amassed a considerable fortune. He acquired houses and lands at Stratford, whither he retired to live at his ease some years before his death in 1616. He is not buried in Westminster Abbey. This is not to be regretted. " What honour could his name have derived," says W. Irving, "from being mingled in dusty companionship with the epitaphs, and escutcheons, and venal eulogiums of a titled multitude? " He lies in the church of his native place, where his ashes are guarded as a precious treasure. His tomb has become a blessed spot for poetical pilgrimage. Thus our Lamartine sleeps at Saint-Point, his sole mausoleum being adorned with that *Crucifix* he has so splendidly sung of; there his relics have neither revolutions to fear nor profanations to undergo.

12. — It is not as an actor, but as a writer of plays, — like our Molière, — that Shakespeare has reached the eminence which the world now gives to him. His plays may be divided into three classes : comedies, tragedies, and histories.

The comedies are fourteen in number. The term *comedy* simply denotes a play that ends happily; but it may have abounded, in the development of the plot, with serious and pathetic incidents. This intermediate style was afterwards called by Fletcher *tragy-comedy*. In Germany the same appellation used to be employed, and also in France. The famous *Çid* was called by its author a *tragy-comedy*. The following list shows the titles in alphabetical order and the date at or about which the fourteen comedies severally appeared :

1. *All's Well that ends Well*, before 1598.
2. *As You Like It*, about 1600.
3. *Comedy of Errors*, about 1590. The plot is derived from the *Menechmi* of Plautus, through one or two pre. vious English versions.
4. *Love's Labour's Lost*, before 1590.
5. *Measure for Measure*, after 1607,
6. *The Merchant of Venise*, about 1594.
7. *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, first printed in 1602.
8. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, between 1593 and 1597.
9. *Much Ado about Nothing*, about 1599.
10. *The Taming of the Shrew* (la Méchante Femme mise à la raison), about 1594.
11. *The Tempest*, about 1611.
12. *Twelfth Night*, about 1601.
13. *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, about 1598.
14. *The Winter's Tale*, 1610 or 1611.

13. — List of Shakespeare's eleven tragedies :

1. *Antony and Cleopatra,* date uncertain, but probably late. The source of this and the other Roman plays is the translation of Plutarch's *Lives*, made in 1579 by Sir Thomas North, twenty years after that made by our Amyot.
2. *Coriolanus.* (See the preceding article.)
3. *Cymbeline*, acted in 1610 or 1611. Taken from Holinshed, whose authority was Geoffrey of Monmouth. Classed as a tragedy, though it does not end tragically.
4. *Hamlet*, first printed in 1602.
5. *Julius Caesar.* (See the note on *Antony and Cleopatra.*)
6. *King Lear*, between 1603 and 1606. (See the article on *Cymbeline.*)
7. *Macbeth*, between 1603 and 1610. Taken from Holinshed's *Chronicle of Scotlande.*
8. *Othello*, about 1602.
9. *Romeo and Juliet*, 1596 or 1597.
10. *Timon of Athens*, date uncertain, assigned both to 1601 and to 1610. Taken from Plutarch's life of Mark Antony, or from Lucian's dialogue, *Timon, or the Misanthrope*. Seems not to be wholly the work of Shakespeare.
11. *Troilus and Cressida*, 1609. Does not properly deserve the name of tragedy, since it does not end tragically.

14. — List of Shakespeare's ten histories or historical plays :

1, 2. *Henri IV.*, in two parts, first printed in 1598. The general source whence Shakespeare drew materials, for this and for his others histories, is Holinshed's

Chronicle. The incomparable Falstaff of *Henri IV.* is a superior and different creation from the Falstaff of the *Merry Wives of Windsor.*

3. *Henry V.*, probable date 1599.
4, 5, 6. *Henri VI.*, part II. published in 1594, and part III. 1595; part I. was printed first. No one of these three plays seems to be, *as a whole*, the work of Shakespeare.
7. *Henri VIII.*, probable date 1613.
8. *King John*, before 1598.
9. *Richard II.*, first printed in 1597.
10. *Richard III.*, about 1593. Some modern writers are disposed to believe that Richard was not really such a monster as Shakespeare has exhibited him.

Two plays remain which are usually printed as Shakespeare's, *Pericles,* a comedy, and *Titus Andronicus,* a tragedy. Thus the plays composing the collection are thirty-seven in number.

15. — To Shakespeare's plays we have to add four other poems and one hundred and fifty-four sonnets. The four poems are, *Venus and Adonis,* the *Rape of Lucrece,* the *Passionate Lover,* and *A Lover's Complaint.* The first is the well-known legend of the goddess wooing the coy youth; the second incorporates the narrative which Livy gives of Tarquin's outrage on the wife of Collatinus: they are Shakespeare's first imperfect youthful productions. The third and the fourth poems are shorter, but similar in style and subject.

Very different from these are the sonnets. They were probably composed from 1592 to 1609, a time when there were many sonnet-writers in England. The first hundred and twenty-six are a noble monument to loving and intimate friendship between the author and William Herbert, afterwards Earl of Pembroke; others sing Shakespear's love for on exceedingly charming but not beautiful woman; others contain wise rules of life.

16. — The books written on Shakespeare and his works would fill a library by themselves. There is no French reader who has not any of them at command. In consequence we shall confine our study to a few remarks on points of special interest for professors and their pupils.

Shakespeare did not create the English regular drama, but he regenerated and wholly transformed it, as if by breathing into it a new soul. The revolution which his genius wrought upon it is placed in the clearest light by comparing his earliest plays with the best which the English possessed before his time. He has made all his predecessors obsolete; their entire works may be read by a small number of curious students, but never become popularly known; the plays of Shakespeare, on the contrary, will never lose their popularity. The heart of man will never cease to be touched by the

gushing tenderness of Juliet, the fine frenzy of the discrowned Lear, the sublime melancholy of Hamlet, the wrath of the perplexed Othello, the eloquent misanthropy of Timon, the fixed hate of Shylock, the terror of Lady Macbeth, the gentleness of Desdemona, etc., etc. Shakespeare's poetry is not only dramatic, it has in itself the power and varied excellences of all other poetry. His language sets him above all other writers, and provides him with a distinguishing style for every one of his great characters.

English style full of French and Latin words is watery; when full of Anglo-Saxon terms, it becomes vivid, impressive, picturesque, and energetic. In consequence, the richer an English book is in Saxon terms, the more excellent is it. In Macaulay ten words in forty are not Saxon, in Shakespeare four only, in much of Scripture one or two. This is the cause why the authorized version of the Bible is the first specimen of literary beauty. After it come Shakespeare's works. Their influence on the English language and literature is immense. At least a hundred editions of them have been made, and at least three hundred commentaries. They have been spread all over England, the United States of America, and the English colonies. Thousands of lines and phrases

peare's world in *Hamlet!* In spite of the great dramatist's bitter feelings against France, our critics have become just enough to acknowledge his superiority, and Voltaire's and his imitators' shallow views are now obsolete. Shakespeare is read and studied in our schools as a classical author, side by side with Homer, Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Plautus, Terence and Virgil.

19. — The age of Elisabeth and James I. produced a concourse of dramatic authors, the like of which is seen nowhere else in literary history. It is usual to rank Benjamin Jonson, or rather **Ben Jonson** (1574-1637) next after Shakespeare. His *Every man in his Humour* brought him into fame. It failed, it is true, in its first representation; but being brought out a second time at the Globe Theatre, by the influence of Shakespeare, it met with success. *Every Man out of is Humour* is a play of less value. *Volpone* and the *Alchemist* are usually placed first. Neither of Jonson's classic tragedies, *Sejanus* and *Catilini*, was of much service to his fame. His comedies and tragedies are seventeen in number, and his masques and other court entertainments thirty-five.

Masques appear to have owed their origin to the mediaeval practice of introducing into public rejoicings, as the *entrées* for instance, masked per-

sons representing fictitious characters. They gradually assumed a more strictly dramatic form, at first partaking more of the nature of *tableaux vivants* than of anything else, and depending most upon the splendour of the dresses used in them. By-and-by they grew into a species of private theatricals, which came into fashion under Elizabeth and James I. They then were composed for the court and the houses of the nobles. Inigo Jones made the scenery for Jonson's masques, but in the end they quarrelled.

20. — In a purer and finer style than the plays of Ben Jonson are written those of **John Fletcher** (1576-1625) and **Francis Beaumont** (1586-1616). They are about fifty-four in number; fifteen of which seem to have been produced by the two friends in conjunction, just as it is often the case now-a-days, when alliances of this kind take place in the composition of dramas, comedies, operas, vaudevilles, etc.; the remainder are understood to have been by Fletcher alone. The first play in the collected works, though not the earliest, is *The Maid's Tragedy*, one of the best of the series. *Philaster*, also a tragedy, was for long the most popular. The *Knight of the Burning* is one of the best-known comedies. *The Faithful Shepherdess*, written by Fletcher alone, stands highest of his

comedies; it suggested to Milton the plan of *Comus*. Fletcher and Beaumont are the founders of the comedy of intrigue, a kind which did much mischief in the hands of Wycherly, Congreve and Dryden; their plays are often disfigured by looseness of fancy and licentiousness, and there are very few, the stories of which could be wholly told without offence.

21. — After Shakespeare, Jonson, Fletcher and Beaumont, the next great name in the English drama is that of **Philip Massinger** (1584-1640). Of thirty-eight dramatic pieces which he is said to have written, only eighteen have been preserved. The famous play of *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* still keeps possession of the stage, for the sake of the finely drawn character of Sir Giles Overreach. The *Virgin Mother*, a tragedy, was extremely popular in its day.

22. — A deeper pathos than that of Massinger, characterizes **John Ford** (1586-1639), who is the author of nine plays that have survived, and who may be called the great painter of unhappy love. The plots of his finest tragedies are so horrible and revolting that it has long ceased to be possible to produce them on the stage. In the *Broken Heart*, for instance, King Amyclas dies, Panthea starves herself to death, Orgilus her lover treacherously

kills her brother Ithocles, Calantha the daughter of Amyclas dies of a *broken heart*, Orgilus opens his veins with his own dagger. Such plays, brought perhaps from England, became very popular in Germany in the seventeenth century, where they were called murdering-shows (Mord-Spektakel). The *Fancies Chaste and Noble*, and the *Lady's Trial* are, besides the *Broken Heart*, Ford's finest tragedies.

23. — Next to Ford as a second-rate dramatist ranks **John Webster**, of whom not even so much as the year of his birth is known. The period of his greatest popularity was about 1620. His tragedies abound in horror. In one of the best, *The Duchess of Malfi*, scarcely characters enough are left alive to bury the dead. Besides two comedies which he wrote in conjunction with **Rowley** (circa 1620), and two others in which he assisted **Decker** (circa 1638), he is the author of four dramatic pieces, among which *The White Devil* ranks with *The Duchess of Malfi*. He seems to have been as slow a writer as our Malherbe, which it may be presumed few of his contemporaries were. In an advertisement prefixed to his *White Devil*, he says. " To those who report I was a long time in finishing this tragedy, I confess I do not write with a goose-quill winged with two

feathers; and, if they will needs make it my fault, I must answer them with that of Euripides to Alcestides, a tragic writer. Alcestides objecting that Euripides had only in three days composed three verses, whereas himself had written three hundred; Thou tell'st truth, quoth he; but here's the difference: thine shall only be read for three days, whereas mine shall continue three ages."

24.—A striking contrast to Webster's slowness is presented by **Thomas Heywood**'s hurry (not to be confounded with his namesake John Heywood, author of the interlude *The four P's*). This was a most prolific writer. Two hundred and twenty plays, he tells us, he composed wholly, or in part. He was for England what Hans Sachs was for Germany, Calderon de la Barca for Spain, and Alexander Hardy for France. Only one of his plays has become famous, *A Woman killed with Kindnesse* (1617): an unfaithful wife, overcome by the inexhaustible goodness of her injured but forgiving husband, droops and expires in the rush of contending emotions—shame, remorse, penitence, and gratitude—which distract her soul.

Of the other dramatists of this period we have but little to say. **Midleton** (1570?-1627) wrote *the Witch*, from which Shakespeare may have derived a suggestion or two for the witches in *Macbeth*.

John Marston dealt in ghosts and murders. **James Shirley** (1596-1666) is the last in the list; thirty-nine plays proceeded from his pen, the best of which is the *Gamester*.

25. — The Gamester was printed in 1637. Shirley was continuing to write plays, when on September 2nd, 1642, the Long Parliament issued an ordinance " suppressing public stage plays throughout the kingdom during these calamitous times ". The Puritans were in the ascendency. The measure they took was then, and has been since, differently appreciated; in general it has been condemned as on abuse of power and a provocation for reaction. Lord Macaulay, in his *Çomic Dramatists of the Restoration*, does not hesitate to declare that the great depravation of the national taste under Charles II. was the effect of the prevalence of Puritanism under the Commonwealth. It is not our design here to justifiy the Puritans; yet their acts concerning the stage admit of defence. When we look into the private life of the Elizabethan dramatists, we too often find it a wild scene of unbridled passion, of a loose and reckless gaiety, cut short by early death. Many of their plays, especially those of the twenty years which preceded the famous ordinance, were on moral grounds painful to read, and scarcely decent to

hierarchy or the throne lack for brave champions. On both sides there emerged strength of intellect and fertility of resources. The Catholic element, though much slighter, acquired some power through the marriage of Henrietta of France with Charles I. (1625). Archbishop Laud took for his motto the word "Thorough". By means of the Star Chamber and the High Commission Court he enforced conformity to the established religion, and sentenced any one who wrote or spoke against the Church of England, to stand in the pillory, to lose his ears, to have his nostrils slit, to be publicly whipped, to be branded on both cheeks, and imprisoned for life. To these ecclesiastical grievances Charles took care to add political. By many illegal or irritating proceedings, such as his levy of ship-money and his long delay in convoking the Parliament, he estranged the commercial and burgher classes, among whom Puritanism had its stronghold. In 1642, the Civil War broke out. The Independents, a more ardent section of the Puritan party, took into their hands the conduct of the rebellion, and were supported by the genius of Cromwell. The King's cause became hopeless after the defeat of Naseby in 1645. After his assassination a reaction in the public conscience commenced. Cromwell, indeed, carried on the govern-

ment with so much ability and vigour, that Macaulay can rightly call him *the greatest prince that has ever ruled England*. But he had no time to reconcile parties, or to give a solid basis to the Commonwealth. After his death (1658) the greater part of the English nation longed for the re-establishment of royalty. From the fiery atmosphere in which the minds of men breathed, they caught an enthusiastic fervour, and their inspiration bore the mark of the convulsions of the Civil War, or of the perplexed era of the Commonwealth and the Protectorate. Not that the mighty events which influenced the national feelings made as much change in the taste and literature of the nation as might have been anticipated. Authors were still a select class, and literature, the delight of the learned and ingenious, had not become food for the multitude. The reign of Charles I., a prince of taste and accomplishments, partially revived the style of the Elizabethan era, but its lustre extended little beyond the court and the nobility; and if Cromwell realised his wish to make the supremacy of England unquestioned abroad, he had neither the time nor the inclination to be for the people a patron of literature.

We begin the list of the authors of this period with those who excelled in prose literature.

2. — **John Selden**(1584-1654) was a most learned miscellaneous writer and a conspicuous political character. He had a seat in Parliament under James, and in the first four years of Charles I.; he witnessed the horrid tyranny of the system of " Thorough ". In 1640 he was sent to the Long Parliament as the representative of the University of Oxford, and played the part of a moderator. His works, Latin or English, *Jani Anglorum Facies Altera, Titles of Honour, History of Tithes, De Jure Naturali et Gentium juxta disciplinam Hebraeorum,* etc., make him the champion of human law against the so-called doctrine of divine right. He shows that the English Constitution is but one great contract between two equal princes, the sovereign and the people. His *Table-Talk*, a little book published by his amanuensis a few years after his death, contains humourous and amusing remarks which make it readable still in our days. The following extract on *Evil Speaking* may serve as a specimen of the author's humour : —

Speak not ill of a great enemy, but rather give him good words, that he may use you the better if you chance to fall into his hands. The Spaniard did this when he was dying; his confessor told him, to work him to repentance, how the devil tormented the wicked that went to hell; the Spaniard

replying, called the devil *my lord*: "I hope my lord the devil is not so cruel." His confessor reproved him. "Excuse me," said the Don, "for calling him so; I know not into what hands I may fall; and if I happen into his, I hope he will use me the better for giving him good words".

3. — The time we treat of was the Augustan period of Anglican divinity; the literature of controversy raged between the Church of England and the Puritans. **Joseph Hall** (1574-1656), bishop of Norwich, is illustrious through his efforts to reconcile Dissenters with the Established Church. He was a stanch adherent to Episcopacy, and wrote in its defence against both Presbyterianism and Romanism. His best-known prose works are his *Contemplations* and his *Occasional Meditations*. He was also a poet, and claims to be the first English *Satirist*. His poetic temperament reveals itself in his prose as well as in his verse, by the forcible and often picturesque character of his style, in which it has been thought he made Seneca his model; he has been called *The English Seneca*.— **John Hales**, another polemical writer, was born in 1584, and died in the same year as Joseph Hall. He was styled *The Ever Memorable*. He published in his lifetime a few treatises, of which the most important is the *Tract concerning Schism and Schismatics*, intended to protest

against the authority of the Fathers of the Church. All his writings were published after his death, under the title of *Golden Remains.* — John Hales' friend, **Chillingworth**, called *The Immortal* (1602-1644), worked out the main idea of his tract on Schism in a work entitled the *Religion of Protestants, a Safe Way to Salvation.*

4.—The greatest name by far among the English divines of this period is that of **Jeremy Taylor** (1613-1667). He was a favourite, and to a great extent a follower, of Archbishop Laud, under whose influence he was a *rigorist* indeed concerning the authority of the Established Church, while he was a *latitudinarian* in his creed. During the Commonwealth he suffered imprisonment several times; at the Restoration he was appointed Bishop of Down and Connor. Though he has been called the *Chrysostom of the English Pulpit,* his labours as a preacher do not appear to have been very fruitful; he is rather the *Spenser of the English prose writers.* His real works are his books, the most remarkable of which are *Of Holy Living* and *Of Holy Dying,* and the famous *Discourse of the Liberty of Prophesying.* His warmth of imagination and poetic fervour render his prose both musical and eloquent, while his long, involved

sentences are managed with the rarest skill. It has been remarked that the pedantic bookish element is very conspicuous in Taylor's language. He coins extensively both from Latin and from Greek. He uses *deturpated* for *deformed, clancularly* for *secretly, immorigerous for disobedient, intenerate* for *render soft.* In like manner he applies words according to their Latin etymology, and contrary to the growing usage—*insolent* in the sense of *unusual, extant* figures (figures *in relief*), an *excellent* pain (*surpassing, extreme*). He has, besides, some few mannerisms, and goes beyond the extreme idiomatic license in the way of forming plurals to abstract nouns — *aversenesses, dissolutions, prudencies, strengths, tolerations.*

5. — **Thomas Fuller** (1608-1681) was both a theological and an historical writer; he passed through various positions in the Established Church, and became chaplain to Charles II. He produced a considerable number of literary works, of which his *Church History of Great Britain* and his *History of the Worthies of England* are the most important. The former has no claim to be called a great historical composition, it is rather a collection of spiritedly told stories. The latter is a production valuable alike for the information it

affords relative to the provincial history of the country, and for the profusion of biographical anecdote and acute observation on men and manners. It contains sketches of about eighteen hundred individuals, arranged under the several counties of England and Wales. Let us quote a little passage from the account of Warwickshire : —

> Though his (Shakespeare's) genius generally was jocular, and inclining him to festivity, yet he could, when so disposed, be solemn and serious, as appears by his tragedies; so that Heraclitus himself (I mean if secret and unseen) might afford to smile at his comedies, they were so merry; and Democritus scarce forbear to sigh at his tragedies, they were so mournful.
>
> He was an eminent instance of the truth of that rule, *Poeta non fit, sed nascitur;* one is not made, but born a poet. Indeed his learning was very little, so that, as Cornish diamonds are not polished by any lapidary, but are pointed, and smoothed even, as they are taken out of the earth, so nature itself was all the art which was used upon him.

Thomas Fuller was one of the greatest and truest wits that ever lived. He had an astonishing memory; it is said that he could repeat five hundred strange words after twice hearing them, and could make use of a sermon *verbatim* if he once heard it. These anecdotes and others are probably overcoloured.

6. — After theology, we come to philosophy. In metaphysics occurs the name of **Thomas**

Hobbes (1588-1679). He early conceived a dislike to the democratical party, and in 1628 published a translation of Thucydides, "that the follies of the Athenian democrats might be made known to his fellow-citizens". Being a zealous Royalist, he found it necessary, at the stormy opening of the Long Parliament, in 1640, to retire to Paris. Among his philosophical acquaintances, there, were Descartes, Gassendi, Father Mersenne, and other learned men, whom the patronage of Cardinal Richelieu had at that time drawn together. Father Mersenne tried, once when he was dangerously ill, to make him a Roman Catholic, but without success. While in Paris, Hobbes was appointed, in 1647, mathematical instructor to Charles, Prince of Wales, who then resided in the French capital. He wrote between 1640 and 1660 the works that have immortalized his name, his Latin treatise entitled, *De Cive*, and his *Leviathan, or the Matter, Form, and Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiastical and Civil,* etc. In this latter work, man is represented as a selfish, corrupt and ferocious animal, whom iron restraint of arbitrary power can alone suffice to bridle. Hobbes is the champion of the doctrine commonly known as the Selfish System of moral philosophy, in his small *Treatise on Human Nature.* He has often been

erroneously confounded with the enemies of religion; his doctrines are neither atheistic nor professedly in antagonism to the Christian theology. The merits ascribed to his style are brevity, simplicity, and precision. He expresses himself in familiar words, explains his general positions by examples, and his order of exposition is such as can be easily followed. His definitions are often striking. In his *Treatise on Human Nature* he thus distinguishes emulation from envy :

> Emulation is grief arising from seeing one's self exceeded or excelled by his concurrent, together with hope to equal or exceed him in time to come, by his own ability. But envy is the same grief joined with pleasure conceived in the imagination of some ill-fortune that may befall him.

7.—Many remarkable works on political science appeared in this agitated period. Whereas Hobbes, in his treatise *De Cive*, represented the party of the philosophical Tories, *Milton* was the champion of the Puritan Whigs. His chief political treatises are, the *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates,* and *The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth,* which was in the form of a letter to General Monk. These and all his great prose works, except the *History of England,* were written between 1640 and the Restoration (1660). The varied and copious learning of the author, the

force and fire of his genius, stamp his prose writings with the same character as his poetry; in English or in Latin, they all bear the mark of a vigorous and glowing mind. Concerning the style of his controversial works, the most divers opinions have been pronounced. Everything depends upon the point of view. Macaulay regrets that these works should in our time be so little read; he thinks that, as compositions, they deserve the attention of every man who wishes to become acquainted with the full power of the English language. We need hardly warn students that Milton's prose is to be enjoyed without being imitated; for modern purposes the language and idiom are too stiffly latinized, and the imagery too fantastic. Further, for works of controversy the style is too ornate, and too coarsely vituperative to have much convincing or converting power.

8. — In this age of excitement we meet with a quiet and peaceable man, already mentioned as the biographer of Hooker. **Izaak Walton** (1593-1683) was one of the most popular writers of his time. He owed his position to his simplicity, his quaint wise thoughts, his pure and benevolent character, his fondness for country rambles, and his powers of description. Besides Hooker's biography, he wrote the lives of several other An-

glican divines, Donne, Sanderson, etc. He is better known for his treatise on angling, *The Complete Angler*, which is a production unique in English literature, and has hardly its fellow in any of the modern languages. It is written in the form of dialogue. A hunter and falconer are introduced as parties, and serve as foils to the venerable and complacent Piscator, in whom the interest of the piece centres. The whole is interesting as a rich store-house of rural pictures and pastoral poetry, of agreeable and humourous fancies, and of truly innocent excentricity. It is still read by anglers for its information, and by general readers as disclosing the character of the writer.

9. — Though **John Bunyan**'s life and works extend into the period of the Restoration, it was the religious excitement of the Civil War and the Commonwealth which induced him to the composition of his books; in consequence, they give him place among the writers of this time. He was born at Elstow, near Bedford, in 1628. His father was a tinker, but gave him such education as could be had at the village school, and brought him up to his own trade. The son travelled for many years about the country in the usual gipsy-life of men of his calling. The force of his imagination and the influence of the religious struggles

he witnessed, early appeared in fits of agitation and religious terror. He had, it is true, a propensity to profane swearing, but notwithstanding his representing himself as being sunk in profligacy and wickedness, he lived a decent and moral life. In 1645 he served a short time in the Parliamentary army, and soon after he become the subject of painful mental conflicts. Having been impressed by the sermon of a Baptist preacher, he joined the Baptists, and became a preacher among them. When, after the Restoration, severe laws were passed against nonconformity, refusing to be silenced, he was thrown into Bedford goal, where he was detained twelve years. Here it was that he composed his *Pilgrim's Progress*. This book narrates the struggles, the experiences, and the trials of a Christian in his passage from a life of sin to everlasting felicity; it is an allegory. When we open the book, we see *Christian* with a burden on his back, and in a detressed state of mind, because the book which he holds in his hand tells him the city he lives in is to be destroyed by fire: This induces him to leave home in order to flee from the wrath to come and to get rid of his burden. He stops at the *Interpreter's House* on his way to the *Cross* and the *Sepulchre*; at the latter place he gets rid of his burden. He then travels on of

Palace Beautiful, from thence descends into the *Valley of Humiliation*, where he encounters the foul fiend *Apollyon*, and reaches the city of *Vanity Fair*; there his friend *Faithful* is put to death. His road then leads him and his new friend *Hope* through *By-path Meadow* to *Doubting Castle*, the stronghold of *Giant Despair*. After their escape from that dangerous place, they pass on to the *Delectable Mountains*, and finally to the river *Death*, which *Christian* and *Hope* have to wade through.

The *Pilgrim's Progress* reminds us of the pilgrimage of Dante through Hell, Purgatory and Paradise, which, however, is regarded as not properly an allegory. As a story, it is a great deal more interesting than Spenser's *Fairy Queen*. The honours it deserves have not always been accorded to its author. Charles II. spoke only the sentiment of his age when he called him *the illiterate tinker*. His readers at first were chiefly among the lowest classes; and so late as 1782 Cowper dared not name him in his poetry for fear of moving a sneer. Now he occupies his proper place, being on a level with the most ignorant reader, but not beneath the highest capacity. Macaulay reckons him one of the two minds of the seventeenth century that possessed the imaginative faculty in the highest

degree — John Milton being the other. What he says of his English is worth quoting : " The style of Bunyan is delightful to every reader, and invaluable as a study to every person who wishes to obtain a wide command over the English language. The vocabulary is the vocabulary of the common people. There is not an expression, if we except a few technical terms of theology, which would puzzle the rudest peasant. We have observed several pages which do not contain a single word of more than two syllables. Yet no writer has said more exactly what he meant to say. For magnificence, for pathos, for vehement exhortation, for subtle disquisition, for every purpose of the poet, the orator, and the divine, this homely dialect, the dialect of plain working-men, was perfectly sufficient. There is no book in our literature on which we would so readily stake the fame of the old unpolluted English language, no book which shows so well how rich that language is in its own proper wealth, and how little it has been improved by all that it has borrowed. "

Bunyan's other works are numerous, but inferior. We will only mention an autobiography he has left, under the title of *Grace Abounding*. This book is the best study for the origin and essence of Puritanism. It is a work which, in spite of its

being specifically English, has the significance for the seventeenth century that the *Confessiones* of St. Augustine have for the fifth, and the *Confessions* of Rousseau for the eighteenth. In these three books beats the full and living pulse of the times in which they were composed.

CHAPTER IX

The Civil War and Commonwealth Period
(1625-1660)

POETS

I.—In the Civil War, the poets, between whom and Puritanism a kind of natural enmity subsisted, sought, with few exceptions, the royal camp. The Parliament had at first but one poet, but that one was Milton. As the drama fell into decay after the reign of James I., so did all other poetry : it became fantastic and overwrought in thought. There was a class of writers who belonged to what has been termed the *metaphysical school*. Their style of writing was of Italian parentage, and was brought in by the Nea-

politan Marini (1569-1625), who resided for some years in France; it was in that country that he produced his *Adone*. Tired of the endless imitations of the ancients, Marini resolved to launch out boldly in a new career of invention. He seduced the poets of the seventeenth century into a laboured and affected style; whimsical comparisons, pompous descriptions, far-fetched images, poetical punning, heterogeneous ideas yoked together, were esteemed as beauties of the first order; the more a poem was studded with conceits, the more praise it received. The founder of the metaphysical, also called the *fantastic* school, in England was **John Donne** (1573-1631). His poems are generally short; they consist of elegies, satires, letters, divine poems, and miscellaneous songs. His versification is rugged, and his style often so obscure that the sphinx could not unravel the riddles it contains. He certainly was a great wit, and it cannot but be that fine lines and stanzas relieve his mass of barbarous quaintness; he does not deserve, however, to be called, as he was by his contemporaries, a great poet. As a divine, he wrote sermons which show deep thinking and strong powers of reasoning.

2. — **Abraham Cowley** (1618-1667) was considered to be the legitimate successor of Donne.

He published his first volume of verse, under the title of *Poetic Blossoms,* when he was yet only a boy of fifteen; one piece contained in this publication, indeed, — *The Tragical History of Pyramus and Thisbe,*—was written when he was only in his tenth year. When he was a student at Trinity College, Cambridge, he wrote the four books of his unfinished *Davideis*, a sacred poem of the troubles of David. There also he published a pastoral comedy entitled *Love's Riddle*, and *Naufragium Joculare*, a Latin comedy, which was performed by the members of his college. Being a Royalist, he was ejected from Cambrige by the Puritan visitors, and removed to Oxford. When the Queen left the country and went to France, he accompanied her, and remained there twelve years. He was sent on various embassies, and for some years his days and nights were taken up by the deciphering of the royal correspondence. Shortly after the Restoration he brought out a dramatic production, the *Cutter of Coleman Street*, in which the jollity and debauchery of the cavaliers are painted in strong colours; the piece was misrepresented or misconstrued at court, and the author neglected for some time, but afterwards returned to favour. His life stands first in Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*. Few poets have been

more popular, or more praised in their own time than Cowley; he was buried in Westminster Abbey near Chaucer and Spenser. His poetry is still read, but the reader is generally glad to escape from it into his prose, where he has good sense and right feeling, instead of cold though glittering conceits, forced analogies, and counterfeited passion. We take from his collection of love poems, entitled the *Mistress*, a specimen of revelry which, if he has copied it from our Ronsard, is a proof of the relations which in his time existed between English and French literature. The drinking song or ode of Ronsard is :

La terre les eaux va boivant,
L'arbre la boit par la racine ;
La mer éparse boit le vent,
Et le soleil boit la marine.

Le soleil est beu de la lune;
Tout boit, soit en haut ou en bas ;
Suivant cette règle commune,
Pourquoi donc ne boirons-nous pas ?

Cowley translates and amplifies the little piece as follows : —

The thirsty earth soaks up the rain,
And drinks and gapes for drink again.
The plants suck in the earth, and are
With constant drinking fresh and fair.

The sea itself, which one would think
Should have but little need of drink,
Drinks ten thousand rivers up
So filled that they o'erflow te cup.
The busy sun (and one would guess
By his drunken fiery face no less)
Drinks up the sea, and when he's done,
The moon and stars drink up the sun.
They drink and dance by their own light;
They drink and revel all the night.
Nothing in Nature's sober found,
But an eternal health goes round.
Fill up the bowl, then, fill it high,
Fill all the glasses there, for why
Should every creature drink but I?
Why, men of morals, tell me why?

Compare the two songs, and you will see how fine Ronsard's is in its simplicity, how overloaded Cowley's with wit and word-catching (1).

3. — **Richard Crashaw** (1613?-1650) was like Cowley, his friend, ejected from the University of Cambridge by the Puritans. He became a Roman Catholic, and remained in that community. He went to Paris, and there suffered great hardships from poverty, till the friendship of Cowley obtained for him the notice of Henrietta, the Queen of Charles I. He died at Loretto, and was mour-

(1) Ronsard declares that he has taken his little poem from Anacreon. It is possible, and even probable, that Cowley has borrowed his directly from the same poet.

ned by Cowley in one of the most moving and beautiful elegies ever written. Some of his works are translations; among these one of the most important is the *Sospetto di Herode* or *The Massacre of the Innocents*, by Marini. The fancies of his own were many miscellaneous pieces, *Steps to the Temple, Delights of the Muses, Hymn to te Morning, Hymn to the Nativity*, etc. He was a passionate admirer of the writings of St. Theresa, and addressed to her memory his finest lines. His poems abound in tenderness, and also in conceits. In a volume of Latin poems which he published while at Cambridge occurs this conceit on the miracle at Cana : —

Lympha pudica Deum vidit et erubuit.
(The modest water saw its God an blushed.)

It reminds us of the two well-known lines of our Théophile :

Ah! voici le poignard qui du sang de son maître
S'est souillé lâchement; il en rougit, le traître.

4. — The most popular of the poets who gave in to the prevailing fashion was **Edmund Waller** (1605-1687). His poems are as polished as modern verse, and have therefore received a higher place than their intrinsic merits deserve.

He owes much of his praise to Dryden and Pope, who were of the opinion that excellence and dignity of rhyme were never fully understood till Waller taught it in lyric. The fact is that neither Dryden nor Pope was acquainted with earlier English poetry, and that they were unable to do justice to Waller's predecessors. They were in the same case as Boileau when writing :

> Villon sut le premier, dans ces siècles grossiers,
> Débrouiller l'art confus de nos vieux romanciers.

Not that Waller's lyrics are of little worth. He knows how to use to cultivated men and polished gifted women the language of graceful, airy compliment, as in his much-flattered lady-love *Saccharissa* (1); nor are times lacking when a vein of deeper feeling is touched, as in *Go Lovely Rose, To Chloris, To Flavia,* ete. But when he tries the heroic style, he often sinks from the sublime

(1) *Saccharissa* is from the Greek σάκχαρ, sugar. By this name is meant Lady Dorothy Sidney, eldest daughter of the Earl of Leicester. She rejected Waller's addresses, and the poet could say :

> " I caught at love and filled my arm with bays. "

She married the Earl of Sunderland; and in her old age, meeting somewhere with Waller, asked him when he would again write such verses upon her. " When you are as young, madam, " said he, " and as handsome as you were then. "

to the ridiculous. In his elegy *Upon the Death of the Lord Protector* he says : —

> Our bounds enlargement was his latest toil,
> Nor hath he left us prisoners to our isle :
> Under the tropics is our language spoke,
> *And part of Flanders hath received our yoke.*

Such spots spoil Wallers poetry; but much greater stains mar his character. He was either a Roundhead or a Royalist. As a member of Parliament, he distinguished himself on the popular side. In 1643 he joined in a plot, called Waller's plot. Some of those concerned were executed, and others were punished by long imprisonments; but he, who appears to have been the most guilty, is understood to have made his peace by his confessions, and was let off with a fine and a license *to go travel abroad*. He delivered in Parliament a speech which is throughout one of the most abject prostrations ever made by anything in the shape of a man. His cowardice had at least one good consequence : he could go to France and improve himself in good letters. He returned during the Protectorate, and when Cromwell died, he celebrated the event in one of hist most vigorous and impressive poems. The Commonwealth fell, and Waller was ready with a congratulatory address to Charles II. The King frankly told him that he

thought his own panegyric much inferior to Cromwell's. " Sir, " replied Waller, " we poets never succeed so well in writing truth as in fiction. " The answer is witty, but it cannot excuse a time-serving politician, a fellow who changes side unscrupulously and who is always ready to cry : " Vive le roi! " or " Vive la ligue! "

5. — A character of another kind was that of **John Cleveland** (1613-1659), also a poet of the fantastic school, the most popular of his own day, the most neglected of all his contemporaries ever since. He was a sincere, even a violent boisterous Royalist; to the royal cause he adhered till its ruin. En 1655, after having led for some years a fugitive life, he was caught and thrown into prison; but after a few months, Cromwell allowed him to go at large. The transaction was honourable for both parties. In his petition to the Lord Protector, Cleveland said : " For the service of his Majesty, if it be objected, I am so far from excusing it, that I am ready to allege it in my vindication. I cannot conceit that my fidelity to my prince should taint me in your opinion; I should rather expect it should recommend me to your favour. " By so frank a confession the poet did not presume too much upon the greatness of Cromwell's spirit. On the other hand, Cleveland

did not keep fair with the Scotch. He hated them both as Presbytarians and as traitors. He wrote against them the most elaborate of his satires, which he called *The Rebel Scot*. Among other invectives, he says that he

.... would not quote
The name of Scot without an antidote.

Had Cleveland's fire and force been supported by a keener and more cultivated intellect, he might have been a great poet. Some of his writings are amatory, and, though conceited, contain true poetry ; it is said that Butler borrowed not a little from him in his *Hudibras*.

6. — The poets already mentioned were nearly all more or less influenced by French literature, a proof that the imitation of France by the modern English poetry does not date from the Restoration, as it is commonly assumed. The court of Charles I. was far from being so thoroughly French as that of Charles II. ; but the connection established between the two kingdoms through Queen Henrietta could not fail to produce a partial imitation in writing as well as in other things. The distinguishing characteristic of French poetry, and of French art generally, neatness in the dressing of thought, had been carried to considerable height

by Marot, Régnier, Ronsard, Malherbe, Racan, Malleville, and others. These writers had exemplified what in light poetry principally may be done by correct and natural expression, smoothness of flow, and all that lies in the *ars celare artem* — the art of making art itself seem nature. They were the true fathers of the poets who materially modified for nearly a whole century the English lyrical and elegiac, didactic and satirical verse. Three of these belong exclusively to the times of Charles I. and are to be spoken of in this place, Carew, Lovelace and Suckling.

Thomas Carew (1589-1639) wrote a masque entitled *Cœlum Britannicum*, which was performed before the court at Whitehall in 1633, and greatly admired. His songs alone are now read: *He that loves a rosy cheek*, and *Ask me no more where Jove bestows*, are in all books of extracts. Though full of similitudes and conceits, they are less extravagant than those of Donne or Crashaw. Strictly speaking, there is nothing great about them, but they are very finished and beautiful, though there is much licentiousness mingled with grace. The author died with the greatest remorse for the license of his writings.

There is more quaintness in the poetry of **Richard Lovelace** (1618-1658) than in that of

Carew. It consits principally of songs and other short pieces, mostly amatory. Many of them are carelessly enough written. The best known is that entitled *To Althea*, composed by Lovelace while in prison as a Royalist, and in which occur the lines : —

> Stone walls do not a prison make,
> Nor iron bars a cage;
> Minds innocent and quiet take
> That for an hermitage.

John Suckling (1609-1641) was as careless as Lovelace in his verse. Engaging in a plot in 1641 to rescue Strafford from the Tower, he was impeached of high treason by the House of Commons, and had just time to make his escape to France. It is to be regretted that he found too friendless an exile; otherwise he would have studied and known our writers better than he did. Broken in health and poor he took poison. Of his gay, airy verse, the *Ballad upon a Wedding* is most widely known. The bridegroom is said to have been Roger Boyle, Lord Broghill, the well-known soldier and politician (afterwards Earl of Orrery), and the bride, Lady Margaret Howard, daughter of the Earl of Suffolk. It is perfect of its kind, and has touches of graphic description and liveliness equal to the pictures of Chaucer. The

most heautiful and famous passages are those beginning respectively : —

Her feet beneath her petticoat,
Like little mice, stole in and out,
As if they feared the light.

and —

Her lips were red; and one was thin,
Compared to that was next her chin,
Some bee had stung it newly.....

7. — Some of the songs of this period seem to be destined to, and may be held to deserve, as enduring a fame as those of our Béranger. Never before or since has English life so blossomed into song. Scotland has since had her Burns, and Ireland her Moore, but to find the English *chanson* in perfection, we must go back to the time we treat of. This is the best answer to those who inweigh against the influence of France, and find no terms severe enough to stigmatize the *Frenchified School, the artificial and formal refinements of French literature*, etc., as German historians of English literature use to say since German arms have conquered France. It is with a real pleasure that we indulge in mentioning men and works marked with the stamp of French influence. In consequence we may be allowed by our readers to

add a few secondary names to those above, before entering upon the greatest one of this period, that of Milton.

John Denham (1615-1668) knew France; in 1648 he was employed to convey the Duke of York to that country, where he himself resided some time. He had written as soon as 1642 his best poem, *Cooper's Hill*, which he afterwards corrected and enlarged. In it he is original, and deserves to be called the author of a species of composition that may be denominated *local poetry*, of which the fundamental subject is some particular landscape, to be poetically described, with the addition of such embellishments as may be supplied by historical retrospection or incidental meditation. This department was afterwards cultivated with great success by English writers and almost exclusively confined to English literature. The view from Cooper's Hill is rich and luxuriant; the river Thames, a ruined abbey, Windsor Forest, and the field of Runnymede are the principal objects which suggest to the author sentimental digressions. Four lines in which he expresses the hope that his own verse may possess the qualities which he attributes to the Thames, have been praised by every critic from Dryden to the present day : —

O could I flow like thee, and make thy stream
My great example, as it is my theme!
Though deep, yet clear; though gentle, yet not dull!
Strong without rage; without o'erflowing, full (1).

One of the most exquisite of the early lyrical poets was **Robert Herrick** (1591-1674). He was a clergyman, and published secular and religious poems, under the title of *Hesperides, or Works both Human an Divine.* They were long neglected, but they have since found many admirers. Washington Irving gives several extracts from his *Christmas Carol* in the well-known sketches on Christmas of the Sketch Book. Herrick's earlier songs express a license over which he has afterwards touchingly mourned : —

For every sentence, clause, and word,
That's not inlaid with Thee, O Lord,
Forgive me, God, and blot each line
Out of my book that is not Thine;
But if 'mongst all Thou findest one
Worthy Thy benediction,
That one of all the rest shall be
The glory of my work and me.

William Habington (1605-1645) wrote also love-poems, but these were as pure as they were sweet and pleasing; this characteristic dis-

(1) The Comte de Grammont, a French wit of Charles II.'s court, says in his *Mémoires*, that *le Chevalier Denham, comblé de richesses aussi bien que d'années*, entered

tinguishes them from nearly all the love-verses of the period. He was the representative of an old Catholic family. His father was a Worcestershire gentleman, condemned to abide always in Worcestershire, for having concealed in his house persons accused of complicity in the Gunpowder Plot; he wrote a history of the county. The son married Lucy Herbert, a daughter of the first Lord Powis. In the name of *Castara* he paid honour to her through some lyrics of pure love and paraphrases of verses in the Psalms.

8. — The poets just mentioned of the fantastic school, namely Cowley, Crashaw, Waller, and Cleveland, together with Thomas Carew, Richard Lovelace, John Suckling, John Denham, and Robert Herrick, were all ardent Royalists, and defended the cause of love and loyalty; but the cause of Puritanism and the Parliament had also its poets. Of these the most eminent, besides Milton, were Wither and Marvell.

George Wither (1588-1667), down to the

for the first time into the marriage state, at the age of seventy-nine. The fact is that he speaks of a second marriage, and that Denham was then only about fifty. Many biographical notices of this poet make him to have survived nearly till the Revolution, though he died in 1668, at the age of fifty-three. His load of riches is as much exaggerated as his load of years.

breaking out of the war between the King and the Parliament, professed himself a strong church and state man. Suddenly his admiration of the hierarchy and the monarchy became converted into the conviction that both were only public nuisances. In 1642 he raised a troop of horse for the Parliament and was promoted to the rank of major. He is the author of some satires entitled *Abuses Stript and Whipt*, a youthful production (1613), for which he was locked up in the Marshalsea. While in prison he wrote *The Shepherd's Hunting*, a dramatic operetta, if so it may be called, in which we learn how Wither, as Philarete (lover of Virtue) had hunted with dogs (the satires in *Abuses Stript and Whipt*) those foxes, wolves, and beasts of prey that spoil the folds and bear the lambs away; but wounded wolves and foxes put on sheep's clothing, complained of the shepherd's hunting, and caused his imprisonment. In 1622 Wither's poems were collected as *Juvenilia*. He continued to write till a short time before his death in 1667; thus he covered nearly seventy years of the seventeenth century with his life, and not very far from sixty with his works. The entire number of his separate compositions exceeds a hundred His satires have a certain inharmoniousness of metre and rudeness of diction; but one excellence

for which all his writings are eminent, prose as well as verse, is their genuine English. His diction, even now, has scarcely a stain of age upon it.

Andrew Marvell (1620-1678), whose era is rather after the Restoration, was at heart a thorough Republican. It is difficult to find a more complete contrast than that presented by his conduct as compared with that of Waller, the ideal of the cowardly and selfish time-server. Marvel was and remained a political satirist on the Whig-Puritan side. His prose writings were very popular in their day. One of his treatises, *An Account of the Growth of Popery and Arbitrary Government in England*, was considered so formidable, that a reward was offered for the discovery of the author and printer. As a poet, he claims an honourable place among the minor ones. His song on the *Emigrants* (the Puritan exiles) *in the Bermudas*, his poems on *The Nymph Complaining for the Death of her Fawn* and on *The Death of His Late Highness. the Lord Protector*, are full of tender feeling and delicate expression. His satirical poems are chiefly directed against the Dutch, the Scotch, and the Stuarts. One of his satires against the Dutch begins thus:—

Holland, that scarce deserves the name of land,
As but the offscouring of the British sand,
And so much earth as was contributed
By the English pilots when they heaved the lead.....

Marvell's poetry is not confined to light exercises of an ingenious and elegant fancy. Witness his verses on Milton's Paradise Lost, —

When I beheld the poet blind, yet bold,.....

which are printed in most editions of Milton. He met with the great poet in Italy, and there commenced a friendship equally honourable to them both. In 1657 he was engaged as assistant to him in the office of Latin Secretary to Cromwell, the result, apparently, of an application of Milton's on his behalf made five years ago.

9. — We have already met with Milton considered as a prose writer; his name as a poet is far above all other names of his time.

John Milton was born in London in the year 1608. His father had embraced the Protestant faith, for which he had been disinherited by his parent. He established himself in London as a scrivener — one who draws up legal contracts, and places money at interest. He had a cultivated mind, and gave his son a careful education, which was continued at St. Paul's School and the University of Cambridge. At the latter the youth distinguished himself by the excellence of his Latin poems. He quitted it in 1632, and spent the next five years at his father's house at Norton in **Buckinghamshire**,

devoting himself to study and selfculture. In 1638, his mother having died, he left the paternal roof, and set out on a European tour, as was then the fashion for gentlemen to complete their education. He travelled for fifteen months in France and Italy. In Paris he made acquaintance with Grotius. At Florence, Rome and Naples he mixed familiarly in the literary society of those cities. The beauty and grace of his person recommended his intellectual gifts. The Marquis Manso, the friend of Tasso, said, referring to the well-known anecdote of Pope Gregory, that if his religion were as good as his other qualifications, he would be *Non Anglus verum Angelus* (1). With Galileo he had on interview at Florence in his prison. At Rome Cardinal Barberini received him kindly. He was about to visit Sicily and Greece, when the news of the increasing civil dissensions at home recalled him to England. In this first period of his life he wrote, among other poems, his *Ode on the Nativity of Christ*, his masque of *Comus, L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*. The Christmas ode is one of the noblest English lyrics. The masque of *Comus* represents the triumph of virtue and philosophy over the power of the senses. It was to be acted at Ludlow Castle, in

(1) " Bene Angli quasi angeli, quia et angelicos vultus habent. " (Gregory the Great.)

Shropshire, by the children of the Earl of Bridgewater, the Lord President of Wales. The two brothers and their sister lose their way in Haywood Forest; the sister separated from her protectors for some time, is met by the enchanter Comus, under whom is represented the worship of sense and pleasure. She resists his allurements. In the end she is found and the enchanter driven away. Comus (from κῶμος, a revel) was the Roman god of banqueting and amusements. The leading incidents of the piece are said to be derived from Homer's Circe. But it is not improbable that they were suggested by an adventure which really happened to the two sons and daughter of the Earl of Bridgewater. For many turns of phrase, and even for some ideas, Milton is indebted to Fletcher's *Faithful Sheperdhess*. *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* are composed, the former in the character of a cheerful, the latter in that of a melancholy, man, and the whole tone of each poem is regulated accordingly. Both are descriptive master-pieces. They were the fruit of Milton's country life at Norton.

10. — With Milton's return begins the second period of his life. From a poet he became a vehement and even furious controversialist. He threw himself into politics with all the ardour of his temperament. The advocate chiefly of republican

principles in the state, he was the most uncompromising enemy of the Episcopal Church. Between 1640 and 1660 he wrote all his prose works, except one. To what we have said about them in the preceding chapter, we shall add here only what is necessary to understand the life and political career of Milton. His fortune being small, he opened a school in 1640; among his pupils were his nephews John and Edward Philips, both men of some eminence. In 1643 he married Mary Powell, the daughter of a royalist gentleman. After the short period of a month, the philosophical seclusion and austere puritanical life of the republican poet proved so distasteful to the cavalier's fair daughter, that she fled to her father's house, and refused to return. Milton resolved to repudiate her, and wrote his pamphlets on *Divorce*. He was meditating a new marriage with another person, when his repentant wife came back an was generously forgiven. In 1644 appeared Milton's *Tractate on Education*, a beautiful dream, and his *Areopagitica, or Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing*. In 1649 he received the appointment of Latin Secretary to the Council of State, a post in which his skill in Latin composition was employed in carrying on the diplomatic intercourse between England and other countries.

Such correspondence was at that time always couched in the universally-understood language of ancient Rome, because this was regarded as the most perfect. For the same reason the most gifted English poets, Milton as well as Cowley, followed the example of Vida and Sanazzaro, and tried their *prentice hand* upon hexameters and elegiacs. Meanwhile there had appeared a work which produced a great sensation; it was the *Eikon Basilike*, a portraiture of Charles I. in his solitudes and sufferings. The authorship was at first attributed to the King, but the work is now understood to have been partly, if not wholly written by Bishop Gauden, of Exeter. To neutralize its effect, Milton wrote in 1649 the *Eikonoclastes*, i. e., the Image Breaker. This political writing was surpassed by a more famous, *Defensio pro populo Anglicano*, published in 1651, in answer to the *Defensio regia pro Carolo Primo*, by Saumaise, a French philologer and rhetorician. For ten years, Milton's eyesight had been failing, owing to the wearisome studies and watchings of his youth. The last remains of it were sacrificed in the composition of his *Defensio Populi*, and by the close of the year 1652, he was totally blind. His wife died about the same time. In 1656 he married Katherine Woodcock, daughter of an ardent Republican. This union

appears to have been far more suitable than the first, but it was of short duration; Katherine died in 1658. The Restoration deprived Milton of his public employment. He could now pursue his private studies, and began the third period of his life.

11. — By the interest of Davenant and Marvell he escaped the persecution of which this event was the signal against one who by his writings had shown himself the most formidable enemy of monarchy and episcopacy. After a short imprisonment, he was liberated and retired to Artillery Walk, near Bunhill Fields. There he married his third wife, and gave himself up to the task which his extraordinary powers constituted his vocation.

Paradise Lost had been begun about 1658, when the division of the secretaryship with Marvell had given Milton greater leisure. It was completed in 1665 and first published in 1667. It is the only great epic poem that English literature possesses. The common supposition that the sale of the work was extremely slow, is erroneous. The first two editions numbering three thousand copies were exhausted before 1678, i. e., in eleven years from the date of the publication of the poem. A modern critic has expressed a doubt whether, published eleven years since, it would have met with a greater demand. We think this critic is

pontifical in the sense of *bridge making, obvious* for *meeting, dissipation* for *dispersion*, and *pretended* for *drawn before* (Lat. *prætentus*), were never employed by English writers before Milton, and have never been employed since. We can say of Milton what was said of the father of poetry himself : —

Aliquando bonus dormitat Homerus.

After all, his work is truly great, and deserves to be imperishable.

13. — After the publication of *Paradise Lost*, Milton continued to write. On the suggestion, it is said, of his friend Ellwood, the Quaker, he composed *Paradise Regained*, which has been unfairly depreciated. It was printed in 1671, in four books. Its subject is, properly speaking, the temptation of Christ by the Devil in the wilderness after his baptism by John.

Paradise Regained was published in one volume with *Samson Agonistes*, a dramatic poem, the subject of which is Samson, a Scripture character, but the hero, the Puritan party or the author himself. In the word *Agonistes* there is a double sense. It may mean a striver in actual contest, or a striver in games for the amusement of the people. Milton took for his theme Samson as a type of the main-

tainers of the *good old cause* in England. Their party was now as Samson, powerless, the scorn of the Philistines of Charles II.'s court; Samson was called to make them sport. Milton himself was blind, as Samson had been. He also had to live mainly in the imagery of the past. Like Samson, he had married a Philistine woman — one not of his own tribe, and having no thoughts or interests in common with his own. The drama closely followed the Greek model, even in the construction of its choruses. It was not intended for the stage.

The active and studious life of the poet was now near a close; he died in his house in the Artillery Walk, on Sunday the 8th of November 1674.

CHAPTER X

The Age of the Restoration and the Revolution

(1660-1702)

1. — For the English, the history of their literature during the last forty years of the seven-

teenth century is perhaps less interesting than that of any other period. The aspect of that time is, on the whole, far from pleasant; and some features, marking many of its literary works, are positively revolting. In the reign of Charles II., England's literary taste fell into decay; and the attempt made after the Revolution to re-introduce order could not eradicate the evils brought in. For the French, this age is worthy of attention, because it marks in the highest degree the influence of their own literature on that of England. The wits and poets returned from their exile in France, and brought back her manners. Had they been able to retain and imitate what was good, polite, and engaging, they would not have deserved to be looked upon scornfully by posterity. They rather copied the defects of their models, and caused the French influence to be cursed instead of blessed :

> Quand sur une personne on prétend se régler,
> C'est par les beaux côtés qu'il lui faut ressembler.

To make the literature of this period better known, it would be useful to expound the political changes which attended the Restoration, the second fall, and the ultimate expulsion of the Stuart dynasty. But there is a writer whose short biography is a true sketch of the literary history of

the second half of the seventeenth century; this writer is Dryden.

2. — **John Dryden** was born at Aldwinkle, Northamptonshire, in 1631. His relations on both sides had adopted Puritan opinions, and he grew up under Puritans influences. He received his education at Westminster School and Trinity College, Cambridge. In 1657 he came to London and acted as secretary to his kinsman, Sir Gilbert Pickering, who stood high in the favour of Cromwell. On the death of the Protector, he wrote a promising production, entitled *Heroic Stanzas*, to commemorate his exploits and great qualities. The eulogy is perspicacious enough. For example, —

From all tempers he could service draw;
The worth of each, with its alloy, he knew;
And as the confidant of Nature saw
How she complexions did divide and brew, —

lines which well describe Cromwell's keen discernement of character. At the Restoration, however, he greeted Charles II. with a poem entitled *Astræa Redux*. He resembled Waller in his want of character and principle, but his talent is far above Waller's. Though in the following year (1661) he wrote a second address to the King, viz., a *Panegyric* on his coronation, he was in bad circumstances, and forced, if his enemies are to be

believed, to turn journeyman to a bookseller, and to write prefaces to books for meat and drink. Such was the position of men of letters in that time; Milton, as has been said in the preceding chapter, received fifteen pounds for the first two editions of *Paradise Lost.* Necessity drove Dryden to the drama; in 1662 he began to write plays. Here the position of the English drama after the Restoration may be explained in a few words.

3. — The theatres had been closed ever since the Puritan party had gained the mastery in London, that is, since the year 1642. At the Restoration of the monarchy, tbe drama was restored. Two theatres were licensed in the metropolis; one, which was under the direct patronage of Charles, was called the King's, — the other, which was patronized by his brother, was known as the Duke's theatre. At court immorality was prevailing, and thence invaded society, so much the more quickly as the Puritans had denounced all public recreations. The dissoluteness of society became the parent of dissoluteness in literature, and principally in the drama. Comedy was considered by dramatists as an excellent instrument for taking their revenge on the Puritans, and the most regular occupation of the fashionable world was going

to the phayhouse. — **Sir William Davenant** (1605-1668), who managed the Duke's theatre, effected two improvements in theatrical representation : he introduced movable scenery, splendid decorations and costumes, and regularly employed female players. Both changes proved a great attraction. Dryden, attached to the King's theatre, would fain have adopted the French heroic metre — the Alexandrine — had the English language not been eminently unsuited for it; he retained the ten-syllable verse of the Elizabethan dramatists, but followed Corneille in forming it into rhyming couplets. He followed Corneille too, not in his better tragedies, where there was a simple dignity, but in his later pieces, where this poet had sought more intricacy of plot, and had become less simple in form, more declamatory and inflated. These were, in fact, the progenitors of the heroic plays of Dryden, which he founded on daring enterprises and romantic adventures. The minor poets more or less adopted the manner of Dryden. Having nothing of the skill and genius of our great dramatists, they were unable to make pictures of human beings in action. Thus they have inculcated in the English mind a false opinion of our dramatic poetry. And even in our days we read in histories of English literature that a play of

Corneille or Racine is little else than a series of beautiful recitations.

4. — After this short explanation of the character of the new English drama, we continue to describe Dryden's literary career. Between 1662 and 1694 he produced twenty-seven plays, of which twelve were tragedies, four tragi-comedies, eight comedies. As the taste of the King was for the French school in tragedy only, but for the Spanish school in comedy, the influence of both is perceptible in Dryden's plays for many years. In 1668 he published his prose *Essay on Dramatic Poesy*, written in the form of a dialogue, in which he defended his principles; but he changed the line of the heroic drama after the appearance of the Duke of Buckingham's satirical comedy, *The Rehearsal* (1671), in which he himself figures under the character of Bayes. He then abandoned rhyme, and followed Shakespeare rather than the French dramatists. His chief plays are: *The Indian Emperor*, *Conquest of Grenada*, *Aurungzebe*, *All for Love*, *Don Sebastian*, tragedies; the *Rival Ladies*, and the *Spanish Friar*, tragi-comedies; *Sir Martin Mar-all*, *An Evening's Love*, and *Marriage à la Mode*, comedies. All those have but little merit and deserve no praise; the comedies, and the comic parts of the tragedies are filled

with gross allusions, and are as false to nature as they are offensive to taste and morality.

5. — If Dryden had written for the stage only, his name would have become a mere remembrance, as well, as the names of Ravenscroft, Etherege, Wycherley, and others. But he has composed other verse, and by this he has attained immortality.

In 1667, he published a long poem, *Annus Mirabilis*, being an account of the great events of the previous twelve months, 1665-6 — the Dutch War, the Plague, and the Fire of London. Among far-fetched conceits, this poem contains vigorous picturesque description.

In 1670, Dryden was appointed poet-laureate (1) and royal historiographer, with a salary of nearly 300 l. a year. Those high offices, his superiority among men of letters, and the dread of his satire, caused him to be both envied and hated. He once received from a couple of bullies hired by the Earl of Rochester the same sort of castigation which Voltaire met with at the hands of the Duc de Rohan. In 1681 he published his *Absalom and*

(1) *Poet-laureate.* An officer of the king's household, whose business was to compose an ode annually for the king's birth-day, and other suitable occasions. It is said this title was first given in the time of Edward IV.

Achitophel, the aim of which was to support the King's cause by attacking the Whig Puritan party. This is the most perfect and powerful satire in the English language. The occasion was furnished by a plot matured by the Earl of Shaftesbury, for placing on the throne at the King's death his natural son the Duke of Monmouth, to the exclusion of his brother the Duke of York. Charles was David; the Duke of Monmouth, Absalom; the Earl of Shaftesbury, Achitophel, and so forth. Two dozen lines repaid Buckingham's *Rehearsal* with interest, Dryden not having forgotten the home-thrust he had received in 1671; Buckingham figured as Zimri. In 1682 another poem by Dryden appeared, *Religio Laici* (A Layman's Religion), which was an article of the faith he afterwards adopted. On the accession of James II., he became indeed a Roman Catholic. Was this conversion a bargain, or did it result from conviction? The question has been carefully examined by Johnson in the most eloquent of all his *Lives of the Poets*, and by Sir Walter in the life prefixed to Dryden's works, the conclusion is that Dryden was led to change his religion by interest and conviction. One of the considerations which may contribute to acquit him of mercenary motives is derived from Bossuet's *Histoire des*

Variations des Églises protestantes, and the virtues of Fénelon, which were the talk of Europe. The first public fruits of Dryden's change of creed were his allegorical poem of the *Hind and Panther* (1687). The hind is the Church of Rome; the panther, the Church of England. The Independents, Quakers, Anabaptists, and other sects are represented as bears, hares, boars, etc. The poet's gift of ratiocination and precise statement in verse is nowhere so well exemplified as in the *Hind and Panther*; the following lines supply the finest instance: —

> One in herself, not rent by schism, but sound,
> Entire, one solid shining diamond;
> Not sparkles shattered into sects like you,
> One is the Church, and must be, to be true;
> One central principle of unity,
> As undivided, so from errors free;
> As one in faith, so one in sanctity.

This poem could not fail to be replied to by various writers. It was parodied in a joint production by Prior and Charles Montague, *The City Mouse and Country Mouse*. The abdication of James II. deprived Dryden of his offices of poet-laureate and royal historiographer; he had the mortification of seeing his place filled by Shadwell the dramatist, his old opponent. During the ten concluding years

of his life, he wrote for bread and produced some of his finest pieces. In 1697, he composed his *Ode to St. Cecilia*, commonly called *Alexander's Feast*, which was received as one of the best lyrics in the English language. His translation of Virgil appeared early in 1698. He was fond of recasting and embellishing the thoughts of others. We thus find many of his finest images in those modernizations of Boccaccio and Chaucer, which he called his *Fables;* they were published in 1700, only a few weeks before his death.

6.—The last two years of his life were not only afflicted with poverty and painful disease; his eldest son, Charles, who was at Rome, chamberlain of the household of Innocent XII., was obliged in 1698 to return to England invalided. Dryden, labouring to meet the new expense thus caused, wrote to a friend of his that he could not spend his own life better than in preserving the life of his son. He died on the 1st of May, 1700. His manner of life was essentially that of a man of letters. Though he keenly watched the conflicts of parties and the development of political questions, he never mixed personally in the turmoil of public life. He was rather diffident and shy, and far from cutting that brilliant figure in fashionable society *which Pope* succeeded in doing. He rose early,

spent all the fore part of the day in his own study reading or writing; then about three o'clock betook himself to Wills's coffee-house, the common resort of a crowd of wits, pamphleteers, poets, and critics. There, seated in his arm-chair, which was moved near the window in summer, and to the fire-side in winter, *glorious John* drank his bottle of port, and ruled the roast, the undoubted chief of the English literary republic.

It would be vain to eulogize Dryden's verse; it has an indescribable charm. Finished excellence, however, in composition, was seldom attained by this poet; his genius was debased by the false taste of the age, and his mind vitiated by its bad morals. His language was sometimes *gallicised;* but he knew how tu use French words sparingly, and designed them to assist the native ones, not to displace them. On the whole, in the wide range taken by his verse he deserves praise, and his contemporaries have anticipated the judgment of posterity when interring his remains with great pomp in Westminster Abbey.

7. — There are many other dramatists whose works date from the second half of the seventeenth century. — **Thomas Otway** (1651-1685) produced in 1675 *Don Carlos, Prince of Spain*, a tragedy, the plot of which he took, as Schiller did long

afterwards, from *Dom Carlos, Nouvelle historique*, published in 1672 by the Abbé de St.-Réal, a clever French writer of that time. In 1677, he wrote his tragedy of *Titus and Berenice;* he followed Racine's plot and used the same characters. Whit his version of *Bérénice*, he published a version from Molière's comedy, les *Fourberies de Scapin* (the Cheats of Scapin). In the tragedy of *Caius Marius* (1680) he showed once more his taste for the French school. In this, however, he left rhyme, and adopted blank verse as the fit measure for tragedy. In *The Orphan*, written in the same measure, he abandoned the French faith in kings and queens, and proved that tears could be drawn by a domestic drama. Unhappily animal passion, being too obtrusively the mainspring of the plot, has driven that play from the theatres. *Venice Preserved* is still occasionally acted. The interest of the piece turns on the concoction and discovery of a plot to overthrow the Venetian senate, — a subject which was doubtless suggested by the tremendous excitement of the Popish Plot, contrived in 1679 by the impostor Titus Oates. This tragedy is founded on the best book written by St.-Réal, entitled *Histoire de la conspiration que les Espagnols formèrent, en 1618, contre la République de Venise*, published in 1674. Otway

is sometimes rugged and irregular in his versification; but in propriety of style and charecter he excels Dryden. His distress is an instance of what English writers had to endure while those of France were sheltered from poverty by Louis XIV.'s munificence. He died in a public-house, in which he had taken refuge to escape a debtor's prison. It is said that in the pangs of hunger, he begged a shilling of a gentleman, who gave him a guinea, that he at once bought bread, and was choked when eagerly swallowing the first mouthful.

8.—**Nathaniel Lee** (1655-1692), a dramatist who possessed no small genius, was as unable to get his living as Otway; in his latter days, after having written eleven tragedies, he was supported by charity. His best plays are *The Rival Queens, or Alexander the Great*, and *Theodosius, or the Force of Love*. — **John Crowne** (circa 1700) was patronized by Rochester, in opposition to Dryden. He wrote a tragedy of some mark, *Thyestes*, founded on the repulsive classical story in which Atreus sets before his brother at a banquet the mangled limbs and blood of his own son. His comedy *Sir Courtly Nice* was successful and long kept the stage. — A more popular rival and enemy of Dryden was **Thomas Shadwell** (1640-1692); it was he whom the great master

had the mortification of seeing promoted to the laurel in his own place at the Revolution. He wrote sixteen plays, of which thirteen are comedies. *The Virtuoso* and *The Lancashire Witches* long held their ground on the comic stage. He took his *Miser* from Molière. — It is hardly worth while to mention the fifteen plays of Mrs. **Aphra Behn** (1642-1689). One of them, *The Roundheads, or the Good Old Cause*, was popular in the reign of Charles II. Mrs. Behn was the authoress of a number of novels and tales, besides her plays, and translated La Rochefoucauld's *Maximes* and Fontenelle's *Pluralité des mondes*.

9. — In comedy the taste of Charles II. being for the model of the Spanish stage, success depended on variety of complicated intrigues, and constantly shifting scenes and adventures. But there arose a new school, of which the tone and form may certainly be traced to the unrivalled genius of Molière. The *comedy of manners* exhibited, in polished and witty prose, the modes of acting, thinking, and talking, prevalent in the fashionable society of the time. This class of writers may be said to begin with **Sir George Etherege** (1636-1689), the author of a once celebrated comedy, *The Man of Mode, or Sir Fopling Flutter*. He was worthy of picturing the corrupt life gathered about Charles II.

He died at Ratisbon, where he was residing as plenipotentiary, by breaking his neck in a fall downstairs when, as a drunken host, he was lighting his guests out of his rooms. — A greater writer than Etherege, but exhibiting similar characteristics, was **William Wycherley** (1640-1715). His father sent him to be educated in France, where he was brought up in the brilliant household of the duc de Montausier. Returning to England, adorned with all the graces of French courtliness, and remarkable for the beauty of his person, he became a brilliant figure in the gay and profligate society of the day. He wrote four plays, *Love in a Wood*, *The Gentleman Dancing-Master*, *The Country Wife*, and *The Plain Dealer*. It is by the two latter that posterity will judge of his dramatic genius; the leading idea of both is borrowed from Molière. *The Country Wife* is founded upon the *École des Femmes*, and *The Plain Dealer* on the *Misanthrope*. Wycherley had not Molière's genius, and he was too corrupt a man to understand his delicacy. " Compare, " says Lord Macaulay, " the *École des Femmes* with *The Country Wife*. Agnès is a simple and amiable girl, whose heart is indeed full of love, but of love sanctioned by honour, morality and religion. Her natural talents are great. They have been hidden, and, as it might appear, destroyed by

an education elaborately bad. But they are called forth into full energy by a virtuous passion. Her lover, while he adores her beauty, is too honest a man to abuse the confiding tenderness of a creature so charming and inexperienced. Wycherley takes this plot into his hands; and forthwith this sweet and graceful courtship becomes a licentious intrigue of the lowest and least sentimental kind, between an impudent London rake and the idiot wife of a country squire. We will not go into details. In truth, Wycherley's indecency is protected against the critics as a skunk is protected against the hunters. It is safe, because it is too filthy to handle, and too noisome, even to approach. It is the same with *The Plain Dealer*... The character of Manly is the best illustration of our meaning. Molière exhibited in his misanthrope a pure and noble mind, which had been sorely vexed by the sight of perfidy and malevolence, disguised under the forms of politeness. As every extreme naturally generates its contrary, Alceste adopts a standard of good and evil directly opposed to that of the society which surrounds him. Courtesy seems to him a vice; and those stern virtues which are neglected by the fops and coquettes of Paris, become too exclusively the objects of his veneration. He is often to blame, he is often ridiculous; but he is always a good man,

and the feeling which he inspires is regret that a person so estimable should be so unamiable. Wycherley borrowed Alceste, and turned him into a ferocious sensualist, who believed himself as great a rascal as he thought every body else. The surliness of Molière's hero is copied and caricatured. But the most nauseous libertinism and the most dastardly fraud are substituted for the purity and integrity of the original." — It has become a common error to confound the plays of **William Congreve** (1667-1728) with those of Wycherley, and to place their author in a low rank among the English dramatists. He is the most witty, the most comic dramatist of England. He wrote all his plays in the reign of William III. The first was *The Old Bachelor*, which brought him great reputation. *The Double Dealer* had much less success. *Love for Love* again was received with enthusiasm, but *The Way of the World* was a failure, and Congreve wrote no more for the stage. Besides these comedies, he produced a tragedy, *The Mourning Bride*, the most successful of all his pieces. Though his comedies abound in witty dialogue and lively incident, they have been banished from the stage, being by no means pure. — **Vanbrugh** (1672-1726) and **Farquhar** (1678-1707) belong to the *comedy of manners*, i. e., to the same school as Etherege,

Wycherley, and Congreve. Vanbrugh wrote the famous comedies of *The Provoked Wife* and *The Provoked Husband,* the latter being left unfinished at his death and completed by Colley Cibber. Farquhar is the author of *The Constant Couple, Sir Harry Wildair,* and *The Beaux'Stratagem,* the latter written on the bed of sickness to which neglect and want had brought him, and from which he sank into an untimely grave, in his thirtieth year. The comedies of Vanbrugh and Farquhar were produced in the reigns of William and Queen Anne.

10. — It has been said with truth that it is not easy to be too severe on the moral character of the comic dramatists of the Restoration and the Revolution. This part of the English literature is a disgrace to the English language and national character. There were without ony doubt many honest men who deplored the depravation they were witnessing, and who hoped that the once wise and sober English nation would awake from its lethargy, and an immoral laugher in his turn become as much out of credit as a pure man was in that time. A writer was wanting who would not be ashamed of trying to stem immorality, for fear of becoming the entertainment of scoffing libertines. That writer was born half a century since; in 1698 he made his

attack. **Jeremy Collier** (1650-1726) was a clergyman bred at Cambridge, a non-juror, that is, one who refused to take the oath of allegiance to king William, a warm advocate therefore of hereditary right. He made himself the exponent of the general feeling in his *Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the Stage*. This pamphlet was written with extraordinary fire, wit and energy, and in spite of its defective scholarship and occasional extravagance, it was read with universal eagerness. Conscious guilt prevented Dryden from taking up the gauntlet thrown down by Collier; it was taken up by Wycherley, Congreve, and Vanbrugh. But the defence they made was poor, and the victory remained, both as regards morality and wit, on the side of Collier. The intellect of the country became ashamed of the drama, and turned its strength to cultivate other branches of literature.

11. — Among the poets who did not write for the stage, Wentworth Dillon, Earl of Roscommon, and Butler deserve mention. — **Roscommon** (1633-1684) was honourably distinguished by the moral purity of his works, and he can be considered as a writer of the classical school and a kind of forerunner of Pope. He is the author of the *Essay on Translated Verse*, a translation of Horace's *Art of Poetry*. This is not a master-piece,

and Roscommon's achievements were much overrated by his eulogizers, Dryden and Pope. — **Samuel Butler** (1612-1680) wrote a humourous poem entitled *Hudibras*; he published it in three parts, the first in 1663, the second in 1664, and the third fourteen years later. Its direct object was to satirize those terrible Puritans, a handful of whom had so long held the nation down, and to defeat those *errant saints*, —

> Who build their faith upon
> The holy text of pike and gun;
> Decide all controversies by
> Infallible artillery;
> And prove their doctrine orthodox
> By apostolic blow and knocks.

But the author has no objection to get a little sport out of all the parties who come across his path, and the bad poetry, the pretentious philosophy, the fashions, the manners, the arts and sciences, of his age are all saluted with a touch more or less withering. *Hudibras* bears the mark of the influence of Cervantes. The figure of the knight Sir Hudibras is intended to represent the military Puritan, half hypocrite, half enthusiast; that of his squire Ralpho is meant to expose a lower type of Puritan character, in which calculating craft, assuming the mask of devotion without

the reality, made its profit out of the enthusiasm of others. Both are satirical creations resembling, if not equal to, Don Quixote and Sancho; the filling-up, however, of the poem is original, and the work is considered as the best burlesque in the English language. Unhappily it is too long (more than 11,000 lines), and contains such a plethora of wit and condensation of thought and style, that there is no one who would be able to read it from the beginning to the end. It was translated into French by John Towneley in 1757.

12. — The age of the Restoration and the Revolution was rich in prose writers, and the development of English prose advanced considerably during this period. **Dryden**, who contributed more than any other English author to improve the poetical diction of his native tongue, performed also essential service of the same kind to English prose. The pieces which he wrote were accompaniments to his poems and plays, and consist of prefaces, dedications, and critical essays, among which the *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* is the first regular and valuable treatise on the art of writing. Besides his prefaces and essays, he published two translations from the French, — Father Bouhour's *Vie de saint François-Xavier*, and Dufrenoy's *De Arte graphica* (the Art of Painting).

13. — In tranquil times, the thoughts and the activity of many of the most gifted minds of a nation are turned outwards, and employed over wide and remote areas. For this reason the best of the English historians had written, at the end of the sixteenth and at the beginning of the seventeenth century on the affairs of other countries, on those of Turkey, for instance, and on the ancient world. But a time of civil discord concentrates the energies of men upon their own country; thus, as the seventeenth century wore on, English contemporary history became a subject of such absorbing and pressing interest, that the English historians had no time to spare for that of foreign nations and distant times. The best known historian of the period was **Edward Hyde, Lord Clarendon** (1609-1674), who had some share in making material for the history that he wrote. His public career began in Parliament in 1640. He supported the moderate opposition to the arbitrary measures of the King; but when Parliament demanded the abolition of Episcopacy, he went over to the King's party. He accompanied the Prince and the Queen-mother to France. After the Restoration he was appointed Chancellor; but a few years later he became unpopular and was banished. He lived at Montpellier, and at Rouen, where he died. It was

in his exile that he composed his *History of the Grand Rebellion*. The work is very long, and many digressions might be omitted. But the theme is deeply interesting, having influenced the whole course of English history down to the present day. The author is partial and seems continually anxious to apologize for the King and the Established Church against the Puritans on the one hand, and the Catholics on the other. — **Bulstrode Whitloke** (1605-1676) was of opposite principles to those of Lord Clarendon. He wrote *Memorials of English Affairs* from the reign of Charles I. to the Restoration, in the form of a diary. — Two other diarists are reckoned in this generation — **Samuel Pepys** (1632-1703) and **John Evelyn** (1620-1706). Pepys' *Diary* extends from 1660 to 1669; Evelyn's is an autobiography extending from 1620 to 1706.

14. — Literature of controversy and theology raged under Charles II., his brother, and William III. The great power and influence which the Roman Church progressively acquired during the reign of Louis XIV. alarmed all Protestant bodies into a valid alliance against the common antagonist. **Richard Baxter** (1615-1691) thundered from the Presbyterian camp. In his writings occur such titles as *A Winding*-sheet for Popery,

The Certainty of Christianity without Popery, etc. But of his multitudinous works, numbering in all 168, only a manual of religious meditation, *The Saint's Everlasting Rest*, has had a durable popularity. — The Anglican bishops and divines were not less vigilant. **Isaac Barrow** (1630-1677) wrote treatises on the Pope's Supremacy and the Unity of the Church. These have not continued in such high estimation as his sermons. — **George Bull** (1634-1710), still regarded as one of the pillars of the Anglican Church, made himself known, when not yet a bishop, by his *Vindication of the Church of England from the Errors of the Church of Rome*. But another of his works is more celebrated; it was the *Defensio Fidei Nicenæ*, for which he received the thanks of an assembly of the French clergy, through the influence of Bossuet. The bishop of Meaux expressed to the *Docteur Bullus* his surprise that so learned and penetrating a mind could fail to recognize the claims of the existing Catholic Church to his allegiance. — **Gilbert Burnet** (1643-1715), equally eminent in theology and in history, published a *History of the Reformation*, for which he received the thanks of both houses of Parliament, so well did it agree with the feeling of the time against Catholicism. Among his papers

he left for publication the *History of his Own Times*, a valuable original source of information for the period between the Restoration and 1713.— Of little importance in literature, but of considerable importance in the history of opinion, is **William Penn** (1644-1718), one of the chief literary defenders of the Quakers. Among his religious treatises and pamphlets is *No Cros No Crown*, written in prison. His steady advocacy of toleration by the State of all but those who maintain principles destructive of industry, fidelity, justice and obedience, frequently brought on him the imputation of being a concealed Jesuit, an emissary of Rome. As of all principles, religious principles are the most inflammable and explosive, it is easy to understand how suspicious must have been the generations we are speaking of. The closest friendship, the rarest talent could not preserve a man from being suspected of harbouring thoughts against the Anglican Church. William Penn had many fellow-sufferers. The great scholar and statesman Grotius himself had been accused of leaning towards Rome; Baxter wrote against him *The Grotian Religion Discovered*. Puritanism was not less persecuted than Catholicism. In 1662 two thousand Presbyterian ministers were ejected from their parishes, under the Act of Uniformity.

Touched by the attitude which the Episcopal Church maintained towards nonconformity, the purer and nobler minds yearned for some scheme of comprehension, under which, concessions being made on both sides, the greater part of the Nonconformists might be brought within the pale of the Church. The men of this school were called *Latitudinarian* divines. One of their chiefs was **Robert Leighton** (1613-1684), the son of a Puritan who in the reign of Charles I. had his ears cut, and was publicly whipped for offending Government in his books. His principal work is the *Commentary of the First Epistle of St. Peter*, full of learning without parade, and rich in evangelical sentiment. Before writing this book, he had resided for some time at Douay, where the acquaintance of some accomplished French students had polished his mind.—Between the fierce semi-political Christianity of the Puritans and the authoritative Christianity of the Churchmen, the philosophical system of faith of **Thomas Browne** (1605-1682) may take its place; it was expounded in a book entitled *Religio Medici* (A Physician's Religion), which has passed through many editions, and has been translated into the principal languages of Europe. It was eagerly read in France, where the author had travelled before he settled at Norwich. Browne

avows himself an orthodox believer in the English Church; yet he does not conceal his tenderness and charity towards the Church of Rome. "I could never hear," he says, "the Ave Mary bell without an elevation.". In the asceticism of pilgrims and friars he found "something of devotion." For his moderation he was denounced as an atheist, as a Papist, and as a Presbyterian.

15. — During the latter half of the seventeenth century England was adorned by the illustrious philosopher **John Locke** (1632-1704). He was the son of a small proprietor in the west of England. His chief studies were medicine and physical science, on which subjects he became an authority. His patron, Lord Ashley, afterwards Earl of Shaftesbury, fascinated by his thoughtful conversation, urged upon him not to pursue medicine as a profession, but to devote the powers of his mind to study of the great questions in politics. When a youth he had read Descartes. In 1675 he visited France, where he resided several years, first at Montpellier, and afterwards at Paris. Here he had the opportunity of cultivating the society of the most eminent French literary men of the day. In 1682, he followed his patron to Holland, and remained there after Shaftesbury's death (1683). At Amsterdam he finished his *Essay concerning Human*

Understanding, on which he had already been at work at Montpellier. He returned to England in the fleet of the conquering William of Orange (1688). He now became a prominent defender of civil and religious liberty. His personal advancement and the triumph of the cause to which he adhered date from the same event which brought dismissal, ruin and humiliation to Dryden. The *Essay concerning Human Understanding* was published in 1690. It is divided into four books. In the first, the author maintains that no knowledge is possessed by the human intellect that did not come to it through the senses : *Nihil in intellectu quod non prius in sensu*. In the second he gives his own theory of ideas, showing how they are derived from sensation or reflexion, or both. The third book treats of words, or language in general, as the instrument of the understanding. The fourth book is concerning knowledge and opinion. The tenth chapter of this book is devoted to the proof of the proposition, that we are capable of knowing certainly that there is a God. In 1690, Locke published also his two *Treatises on Government*, the doctrines of which have been persistently carried into practice by his own country ever since his death, and recently by other countries also. His other principal works are three *Letters*

on Toleration, the *Thoughts upon Education,* the treatise on the *Reasonableness of Christianity.* Few names occur in the history of English literature which are more noteworthy than that of Locke. He died at Oates in Essex. His grave long lay neglected and in decay. It was repaired and restored in 1865. Among the eminent men who contributed to the cost of the genial tribute to his memory were Victor Cousin and Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire.

16.—Many historians of English literature give an honourable place, among the prose writers of this period, to **Sir William Temple** (1628-1698), one of the most remarkable diplomatists and statesmen in the reign of Charles II. They found their judgment on that of Swift and Johnson rather than on an attentive reading of Temple's writings. These consist chiefly of short miscellaneous pieces. The longest production is *Observations upon the United Provinces of the Netherlands.* The *Essay on Ancient and Modern Learning* is of a certain interest for French students. Temple maintains thas the ancient literature is superior to the modern. His *Essay* gave occasion to one of the most celebrated literary controversies which have occurred in England. The composition of it was suggested by French disputes on the same

in the rooms of Dr. Wilkins, a Latitudinarian divine. It was an honour for them to number among their fellows the great Newton so soon after their foundation, and to begin, so to say, their literature with a name that has justly been called the glory of human nature.

CHAPTER XI

The first half of the eighteenth century

1. — The greatest literary name in the first half of the eighteenth century is that of Pope. It fills up, by various productions, the space between 1704 and 1744, and marks a period when the position of men of letters in England became independent and honourable.

Alexander Pope was born in 1688 in London, where his father carried on business as a linendraper and amassed a considerable fortune. Soon after his birth, his parents went to live at Binfield, near Windsor. As they were of the Romish persuasion, they would not at first have their son educated in a public school. He got ins*truction at home* from a family priest, who taught

him the rudiments of Latin and Greek. The boy was sickly and frail from birth, and of almost dwarfish stature. By constant care and nursing he was preserved, and afterwards sent to a Catholic seminary at Twyford, near Winchester. There he was severely whipped for having lampooned his teacher. He was removed to a small school in London, where he learned little or nothing. In his twelfth or thirteenth year, he returned home to Binfield, and devoted himself to a course of self-instruction. Studying in his own way, he tried his skill in verse upon translations and imitations of Latin and English poets. So enthusiastic was he in his pursuit of literature, that he took delight in remembering as a piece of good fortune that he had seen Dryden when in London. As Dryden died in 1700, his youthful admirer could not have been more than twelve years of age. In 1704, at the age of sixteen, he wrote his *Pastorals;* but they were not printed until he was twenty-one. It was at this age, in 1709, that he first appeared as a poet. In 1711, was published his *Essay on Criticism.* The ripeness of judgment which it displays is remarkable. The impulse which actuated him in projecting and composing it, may be traced to his passionate admiration of the classic poets. Yet it is not to be supposed that this admiration was all

spontaneous. Boileau's *Art poétique* was known to Pope. The controversy in which the French poet had been engaged with Perrault respecting the comparative merits of ancient and modern learning, and which had spread to England, must have excited a keen interest in the young critic. The work of René le Bossu (1631-1680), *Réflexions sur la poésie épique*, and that of René Rapin (1621-1687), *Réflexions sur la Poétique d'Aristote*, had been read with attention beyond the limits of France, and were probably familiar to Pope. As a whole, the precepts of the *Essay on Criticism* are the same as those inculcated by Horace, and repeated by Boileau, and all the poets and critics of the classical school; but they are expressed by Pope with such a union of delicacy of thought and melody of verse, that the work appears less an imitation than an original poem.

2. — The *Essay on Criticism* was soon followed by *The Rape of the Lock* (1712), a mock-heroic poem, founded on a frolic of gallantry in which Lord Petre cut off a lock of hair from the head of Arabella Fermor, maid of honour to the queen Anne. From this incident arose a quarrel between the two families, and Pope wrote his piece "to laugh them together again". » The poem is a *little dwarf-epic* in five books, in which are des-

cribed Belinda's (miss Arabella Fermor) toilette, the sacrifice offered by the baron (lord Petre) in the hope of succeeding in his design on the Lock, the council of the sylphs under their leader Ariel, the tremendous catastrophe of the rape of the Lock, the fearful combat between beaux and belles, and the final elevation of the Lock as the constellation of the Tress of Berenice. This poem is the victorious rival to the *Lutrin,* and is indeed superior to every heroic comic composition that the world has hitherto seen. *Windsor Forest* (1713) is a poem of description and reflection, which may be compared in point of form and treatment with the Georgics of Virgil. Its chief subjects are the praises of Thames and his tributaries; the design is evidently taken from Denham's *Cooper's Hill.* Between the years 1712 and 1725, Pope was occupied with the translation of Homer. The version of the Iliad was executed entirely by himself; but in translating the Odyssey he procured the assistance of two minor poets, Fenton and Broome. Though in his hands these poems have no more the air of antiquity than if he had himself invented them, they still maintain their popularity, being unequalled in splendour of versification. Deducting the sums paid to his co-translators, Pope realised by the Iliad and Odyssey about 9,000 l. (225,000 francs)

— a striking instance of the change for the better in the position of men of letters : fifty years back Milton had received 15 l. (375 francs) for the first two editions of *Paradise Lost.* While engaged with Homer, Pope published the *Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady,* and the *Epistle of Eloisa to Abelard,* in which he displayed the richest hues of imagination and the finest impulses of the heart. Having become a comparatively wealthy man, he purchased a villa at Twickenham; beautifully situated on the banks of the Thames, and removed to it with his aged widowed mother. There he continued to reside during the remainder of his life, and was visited by all the illustrious men of his time, wits, poets, orators, and ministers of state. His natural propensity to vanity and jealousy was increased by his lordly situation. His adversaries knew his weak points and did not spare him. But he did not allow any one to attack his literary talent with impunity. In 1729, he dealt a sharp thrust to all who had dared to do so, in his satire the *Dunciad,* an imitation of Dryden's satire on Thomas Shadwell, *Mac-Flecknoe.* Among the persons celebrated in the poem are sir Richard Blackmore, Richard Bentley, Daniel Defoe, John Dennis, Lewis Theobald, Sir *Robert Walpole,* and others, who were all denoun-

ced as dunces or blockheads. The *Dunciad* is often indelicate, and did not proceed from a generous mind. The *Essay on Man* (1732) was more worthy of Pope's fame, not for its philosophy, but for its poetry. It was addressed to lord Bolingbroke, known for his attacks on Christianity. It strikes the key-note of eighteenth century thought. The doctrine of fatalism, which Montesquieu hesitatingly suggested in his *Esprit des Lois*, and Voltaire afterwards more boldly propounded in the *Essai sur les Mœurs*, and which in its last and most revolting development was exhibited in the treatise of Helvetius *Sur l'Homme*, is found in quintessence in the *Essay on Man*.

3. — Pope's future labours were chiefly confined to satire, consisting of four *Moral Essays*, in the form of epistles addressed to several persons; of an epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, also called the *Prologue to the Satires*; of *Imitations of Horace*; and of an *Epilogue to the Satires*. In these satirical writings, there is an occasional fierceness and petulance which cannot be justified. Parodying his own description of Erasmus, one might call the writer,

The glory of Parnassus, and the shame.

For instance, in the *Prologue* occurs a scurrilous attack upon Lord Hervey, the grossness of which

was not a great writer before the beginning of the eighteenth century. His fame at first chiefly rested on poetical works, which are now but little read. It then was grounded on his prose works, which have a lasting worth and continue to charm us as much as they did those for whom they were written. His name became known by some verses addressed to the veteran poet Dryden. A complimentary poem on one of the campaigns of King William procured him a pension which enabled him to travel in France and Italy (1699-1702). In 1705, he owed to a poem commemorating the victory of Blenheim the office of Under-Secretary of State. Thereafter he held various political offices, and died in 1719, at the early age of forty-seven. His first prose composition was his *Dialogues on Medals,* written during his Continental travels. These were designed to show the usefulness of ancient medals, especially in relation to the Latin and Greek poets. The book was published seven years after the author's death by his friend Tickell. In 1702, appeared the *Remarks on several Parts of Italy*, full of happy allusions to ancient Roman history and literature.

In Addison's time periodicals were brought into fashion. A great many were pnblished, weekly, *bi-weekly, or daily*; some were continued for a few

weeks, some for one or two years; most of them were short-lived. A periodical sheet was started to vent an opinion that, in the present day, would be expressed in a letter, or a series of letters, to a daily newspaper, and expired either when the author had exhausted the idea, or when the public had received enough and refused to purchase more.

Addison made himself best known by his contributions to periodical papers — the *Tatler*, the *Spectator*, and the *Guardian*. The *Tatler* was published for the first time in 1709, on Tuesday, the 12th of April, by Sir **Richard Steele**, under the assumed name of Isaac Bickerstaff. It was issued every Tuesday, Thursday. and Saturday. The last number appeared on January 2nd, 1711. The *Spectator* began on March 1st, 1711, and continued daily until december 6th, 1712. It was resumed in 1714, when 80 numbers only were published, and formed what is known as the *Eighth Volume*. The idea of the *Spectator* itself was Addison's, but the notion of the periodical was derived from that of the *Tatler*, just as the success of the *Spectator*, in its turn suggested the *Guardian*, also a daily paper edited by Steele, and issued from March 12th to October 1st, 1713. The professed purpose of these three publications was to discuss the fashions and manners of society, the pulpit, the

theatre, the opera, and general literature; in short, they were open to all the subjects now discussed in the *Saturday Review*, the *Spectator*, the *Examiner*, except politics. Out of the 271 numbers to which the *Tatler* extended, Addison wrote 41; 34 were written by Addison and Steele together; **Swift** is credited with 13, **Harrison** contributed 1; and **John Hughes** is responsible for 6. The remainder were nearly all the work of Steele alone. The *Spectator* had in all 635 numbers, of which Addison wrote 274, and Steele 240. The *Guardian* extended to 175; Steele wrote 82 papers, and Addison 53. At the end of 1715 Addison commenced writing the *Freeholder*, at the rate of 2 papers a week, and continued it till the middle of the next year. This was a strictly political paper, undertaken in the defence of the established Government; sometimes with argument, sometimes with mirth. On the whole, Addison is considered as the greatest of the miscellaneous writers of England. His prose works charm us by their gracefulness, delicate fancy, pure morality, and original humour. As the first and best examples of a new style, they hold a high place in the history of English literature.

6. — It is scarcely worth noting that Addison *wrote for the stage*. His genius was not adapted to

the drama. In 1707, he produced *Rosamond*, a kind of opera, which was acted only for three nights. Afterwards he wrote a comedy, *The Drummer, or the Haunted House*. This was imitated by our Destouches in his *Tambour nocturne*, which in its turn became a German comedy by the hands of Gottsched's wife. In 1713, Addison brought on the stage his tragedy of *Cato*, modelled upon the French pattern. It is in form a strictly classic play; the unities are observed, and all admixture of comic matter is avoided as carefully as in any play of Racine's. The prologue was written by Pope. Though the play had no merit of a dramatic nature, it met with signal success, partly from the eminence of its author, partly from the avidity with which the political allusions were caught up and applied by furious parties. The Whigs cheered the frequent tirades on liberty and patriotism; the Tories echoed back the cheers, because they did not choose to be thought more friendly to tyranny than their opponents. In 1715, our Deschamps took up the subject, and made his poor tragedy of *Caton d'Utique*. In 1732, Gottsched pasted the play of Deschamps to Addison's and produced his *Sterbender Cato* (the Dying Cato), a tragedy of little value, but which was then regarded as the

best that had ever appeared in Germany; it was as regular as the English play, and its author boasted that he had been the first to apply the classical rules to the German drama.

7. — Addison had cordial relations with Pope; yet several trifling circumstances conspired to create an unpleasant state of feeling between them. More close were Pope's relations with Swift, the most original genius, as well as the most striking character of this period. **Jonathan Swift** was born in Dublin, in 1667, of an English family. He was a posthumous child, and found himself from his earliest years dependent upon the charity of distant relatives. He early adopted the custom of execrating the day on which he had come into the world. At Trinity College, Dublin, he neglected academical pursuits, and it was only at the end of seven years that he was admitted B. A. (Bachelor of Arts) *speciali gratiâ*. In 1688 he entered the household of Sir William Temple, a distant connexion of his family, and remained in that sybaritical diplomatist's service as a sort of humble secretary, and literary subordinate. He was too proud and ambitious a character not to feel deeply the miseries of dependence; this increased the misanthropical propensities of his nature. At *William Temple's he* met King William, who offered

him a troop of horse, which he declined, his thoughts being directed to the Church. He took orders in the Irish Church, but soon became disgusted with the life of a clergyman. In 1701, he entered on public life as political pamphleteer on the side of the Whigs. His first work was a defence of the Whig ministers who had been impeached by the House of Commons. It was published under the title of *A Discourse of the Contrast between the Nobles and Commons of Athens and Rome.* It is written without any of the irony that afterwards distinguished his style. His next work was the *Battle of the Books* (1703), a prose *jeu d'esprit*, of which the full title runs a follows: — *A full and true account of the Battle fought last Friday between the Ancient and Modern Books in St. James's Library.* It was written to support William Temple in his dispute as to the relative merits of ancient and modern learning. It exhibits all the characteristics of Swift's style, its personal satire, and strong racy humour. In 1704 appeared, anonymously, the *Tale of a Tub*, in which, under the allegory of three sons altering, neglecting, observing, or mistaking the will of their father, Swift ridicules the Roman Catholics and the Presbyterians with a view of exalting the High Church party. This was a satire at once

of their kind. They consist of Odes, Epistles, Epigrams, Songs, Satires, and Epitaphs. Many are addressed to Stella, or written in her honour. One of the longest was addressed to Hester Vanhomrigh, under the title of *Cadenus and Vanessa*. The account of Swift's life would be incomplete without mentioning these two unhappy women. Stella, whose real name was Hester Johnson, passed as a daughter of Sir William Temple's steward. When Swift went to Ireland he persuaded her to come and live near him. He kept up with her all the intimacy of a Platonic friendship, and eventually was united to her by a private marriage; he, however, for some reason or other, never pupublicly acknowledged her as his wife. As for Miss Vanhomrigh, while Swift was directing her intellectual education, she conceived an ardent passion for him. Warm-hearted and impetuous, she made him an offer of marriage. The disappointment of her hopes, added to the discovery of his private marriage to Stella, broke her heart and brought her to the grave. Swift was afflicted with insanity for the last four years of his life. He died in 1745, a year after Pope.

9.—No member of the brilliant society of which Pope and Swift were the chief luminaries, deserves more respect, both for his intellectual and personal

qualities, than **Dr. John Arbuthnot** (1675-1735). In 1712 he wrote a clever political satire, *Law is a Bottomless Pit, or the History of John Bull*, designed to ridicule the Duke of Marlborough, and render the nation discontented with the French war. The characters of the various nations and parties are conceived and maintained with consummate spirit; and perhaps the popular ideal of John Bull, with which Englishmen are so fond of identifying their personal and national peculiarities, was first stamped and fixed by Arbuthnot's amusing burlesque. The satirical *Memoirs of the Extraordinary Life, Works, and Discoveries of Martinus Scriblerus*, published in Pope's works, was chiefly, if not wholly, written by Arbuthnot. It is a kind of literary Don Quixote, and was intended to ridicule affectation and false taste in learning. There are, however, many useful hints thrown out amidst the general pedantry of the book. For instance, it is said that Martinus Scriblerus's father never gave him a fig or an orange, but he required him to say from what country it came. Is not this what in some schools is termed and object-lesson?

10. — **Sir Samuel Garth** (1665-1718) deserves mention as the earlier encourager of Pope and the most faithful friend of Addison. He was an

eminent physician, and also a poet in his leisure hours. He wrote a mock-heroic poem, the *Dispensary*, the idea of which he took from Boileau's *Lutrin*. A bitter quarrel had broken out between the College of Physicians and the apothecaries concerning the erection of a dispensary in London. Garth ridiculed some of the leading apothecaries of the day. The subject is somewhat dull, and the poem is far too long.

11.—The best-beloved of all the Pope and Swift circle of wits and poets was **John Gay** (1688-1732). His songs and ballads are inimitable. Swift suggested him the idea of a pastoral in which the characters should be thieves and highwaymen, and the *Beggar's Opera* was the result. The attractiveness of the piece was enhanced by the introduction of a number of popular airs. It brought its author large gains, displaced for a time the Italian opera, and originated the English opera, a kind of light comedy blended with song. Gay's *Fables* are the best the English possess. He took from La Fontaine the idea of versifying Aesop, but executed it with far inferior power and grace.

12.—The period of internal peace which began with the return to power of the Tories and the treaty of Utrecht, occasioned the rise of a large class of readers. For persons with leisure and mo-

ney, nothing became more precious than books. The higher classes found a provision in the periodicals, the *Tatler*, the *Spectator*, the *Guardian*, and others. But these were too serious for people who demanded from literature amusement rather than instruction, and cared less for being excited to think than for being made to enjoy. The stage could not satisfy their wants, not having raised itself after Jeremy Collier's attack. A new provision arose in the *novel*. This kind of writing must not be mistaken for what we call *romance* in English literature. Before the eighteenth century we meet only with romances, i. e., narratives founded on extraordinary adventures; such were Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, the *Grand Cyrus* and other productions of Madeleine Scudéry and Calprenède, translated into English and spread in their day all over England. Mrs. Aphra Behn's *Histories* and *Novels*, towards the end of the seventeenth century, had for their heroes romantic characters. A *novel* is a story of real life, in which the plot, far from being worked out by any preternatural or supernatural agency, is formed and carried on by personages who have existed or may resemble human beings.

13.—The first of the English novelists was **Daniel Defoe** (1661-1731). He is so well known as the

author of *Robinson Crusoe,* that many think of him in no other capacity. He was nearly sixty years old when, in 1719, he published this novel. It is founded on the true story of Alexander Selkirk, a sailor cast by shipwreck on the uninhabited island of Juan Fernandez, near the western coast of South America. An unostentatious aptness of invention, practical good-sense, and circumstantial plainness, make everything plausible in *Robinson Crusoe.* In Defoe's other novels the adventures encountered by the supposed narrator are detailed with the same minuteness, and denote such a knowledge of the circumstances of life among different ranks and conditions of men, that all his fictions would pass for record of actual experience. Lord Chatham is said to have been misled by the extraordinary air of truthfulness which distinguishes the tale entitled the *Memoirs of a Cavalier*.

Defoe was a vigorous political writer. In 1702, he composed for the Whig side an ironical pamphlet, *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*, for which he was fined by the House of Commons, pilloried, and imprisoned. He is the first person who, in the literary history of England, deserves to be named as a good newspaper-writer. In 1704, he began the publication of his *Review*, a literary *journal* which may be regarded as the prototype

of the English modern semi-political, semi-literary periodicals; he continued it single-handed for eight years.

As a writer, Defoe is old-fashioned. Many of his phrases have long since dropped out of current English, and one would not be as safe in using an expression upon his authority as upon that of Dryden, Addison, or Pope. Though he was no poet, he could reason in verse. His *True-born Englishman*, a composition of a very coarse kind, has many good lines for the defence of King William and his Dutch guards. The strange opening has often been quoted : —

> Wherever God erects a house of prayer,
> The devil always builds a chapel there;
> And 'twill be found upon examination,
> The latter has the largest congregation.

14. — We have already met with **Matthew Prior** (1666-1721) when treating of Dryden's *Hind and Panther*. He first came into notice as the author, jointly with Charles Montague, of the *City Mouse and Country Mouse*. Like most of the writers of the period, he joined in the conflict between the Whigs and the Tories. First he was a Whig, but then turned a Tory, and was thrown into prison. Though he was an associate of Pope and Swift, we hear less of him in their epistolary

correspondence than of most of their other friends. Much that he wrote is now forgotten. In his odes, designed to rival those of Boileau, he is less successful than in his epigrams and his verses of society; yet his *Carmen Seculare*, written in the century year 1700, in praise of William III., is a very fine piece. When, in 1711, he had come with Bolingbroke to France, to negotiate a treaty of peace, he lived in splendour in Paris, and was a favourite of Louis XIV. He was perfectly acquainted with our literature, and wrote with that union of ease and fluency with sprightliness and point which characterises the French writers. He seems to have used Molière's works as a store of fine thoughts. Read, for instance, the advice to a jealous husband in the *Padlock* not to immure his wife or set spies over her, but give her free liberty to range over the world; the poem ends with these lines: —

> Be to her faults a little blind,
> Be to her virtues very kind;
> Let all her ways be unconfined,
> And clap your padlock—on her mind.

Compare this passage and others with the *École des Maris* :

> Leur sexe aime à jouir d'un peu de liberté.
> ....
> .... les verroux et les grilles
> *Ne font pas* la vertu des femmes ni des filles.

. . . .
Je trouve que le cœur est ce qu'il faut gagner.
. . . .
. . . . je tiens sans cesse
Qu'il nous faut en riant instruire la jeunesse,
Reprendre ses défauts avec grande douceur,
Et du nom de vertu ne lui point faire peur.

15. — **Thomas Parnell**'s course of life (1669-1718) resembles Prior's. He made in the same way his change from the Whigs to the Tories, and was the friend of Swift and Pope. His versification is smooth and his style at once grave and picturesque. Sometimes he rises to considerable impressiveness and solemn pathos, as, for instance, in his *Night Piece on Death,* which Goldsmith preferred to Gray's *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard,* a preference, however, in which few modern readers will concur. He is rather remembered as the author of the *Hermit,* familiar to most English readers from their infancy.

16. — **James Thomson** (1700-1748) chiefly owed to Pope the beginning of his reputation. When, in 1726, his poem of *Winter* appeared, it obtained the warm suffrages of Pope, then supreme in the literary world, and who not only gave advice to the young aspirant, but even corrected and retouched several passages in his work. *Summer* was published in 1727; and in 1728

Thomson issued proposals for publishing by subscription the *Four Seasons*. Among his guinea subscribers, Pope occupied an honoured place. The *Seasons* must be considered as the corner-stone of Thomson's literary fame. It is a poem, in plan and treatment, entirely original. The author has observed every fleeting smile or frown on the ever-changing face of nature in England. The work retains its popularity, especially with young lovers of nature. Thomson wrote for the stage, beginning at Drury Lane with *Sophonisba,* a tragedy in the style of Addison's *Cato*. The success of this play is said to have been marred by a ridiculous circumstance. There was an absurdly flat line,

O Sophonisba! Sophonisba, O!

On the night of the first performance, a spectator openly parodied it as,

O Jemmy Thomson! Jemmy Thomson, O!

After that it was altered into,

O Sophonisba! I am wholly thine.

When nine years later Thomson produced his *Agamemnon*, another tragedy, Pope countenanced it by coming to it the first night and expressing his personal regard for the author in a poetical *epistle*. One of Thomson's last compositions was his

Castle of Indolence, an allegorical poem, the materials of which are derived originally from Tasso. It is written in the Spenserian stanza, and is after the *Seasons* Thomson's best work.

17. — At the same time with Pope and Swift flourished in England one of the greatest scholars that had appeared in Europe since the revival of letters, **Richard Bentley** `(1662-1742)). He cleverly displayed his erudition in a quarrel concerning the so called *Epistles* of Phalaris, which William Temple had supposed to be the genuine production of the tyrant of Agrigentum, B. C. 565. His *Dissertation* of these Epistles is the finest piece of erudite criticism that has ever appeared from an English pen. By an analysis of their language, Bentley proved that they were written, not in Sicilian, but in Attic Greek, and that they were of a period many centuries later than the age of Phalaris. His other great performance was an answer to **Anthony Collins'** (1676-1729) *Discourse on Free-Thinking*, under the name of *Phileleutherus Lipsiensis*. Collins had derived some cavilling objections from the variety of readings in the manuscripts of the New Testament. Bentley proved that this Book was on the whole in a better state than that of any of the Greek classical authors. He exulted in the free-thinker's unscholarly

mistakes, and clearly stated that the different readings dit not in the least give different senses. " Choose as awkwardly as you will ", he said; " choose the worst by design out of the whole lump of readings : and not one article of faith or moral precept is either lost or perverted in them. Put them into the hands of a knave or a fool, and, even with the most sinistrous and absurd choice, he shall not extinguish the light of one chapter, or so disguise Christianity, but that every feature of it will still be the same. "

18. — **Francis Atterbury** (1662-1732) also took part in the strife arising out of the *Epistles* of Phalaris, and was involved, as well as Bentley, in the celebrated *Battle of the Books*. Being tutor to Charles Boyle, the editor of the Epistles, he had a hand in the composition of the reply which, published under thee name of Boyle, was expected to cover Bentley with confusion. Atterbury was bishop of Rochester, and an uncompromising champion of the High Church party. He excelled in controversial fence. His sermons are among the best for style. No name, among the brilliant circle which surrounded Pope and Swift is more remarkable than his. He was a tender and sincere friend of Pope, and guided him with wise and valuable literary counsel. After the accession oı

George I., he was suspected of intriguing with the Pretender, and banished. He died in Paris.

19. — **Lord Bolingbroke** (1678-1751) was also an intimate friend of Pope and Swift, and forced to flee to France. There he had frequent intercourse with writers who then assailed Christianity, and increased his propensity to scepticism and philosophy hostile to religion. His best known works are his *Reflections on Exile*, his *Letters on the Study of History*, *On the True Use of Retirement*, and *On the Spirit of Patriotism*. They are full of nothings, by which he sought to comfort his own mind in banishment. But if the thought is feeble, the diction is beautiful. The most striking feature of lord Bolingbroke's style is splendour of declamation. All his works, philosophical as well as political, are read like elaborate speeches. They were published in a complete edition three years after his death by David Mallet, a Pertshire man who participated in his septicism. " Having ", said Dr. Johnson, " charged a blunderbuss against morality and religion, he had not the resolution to fire it off himself, but left half-a-crown to a beggarly Scotchman to draw the trigger after his death ".

20. — **George Berkeley** (1684-1753) was sincerely beloved by the members of the circle

which surrounded Pope and Swift. He established for himself a high philosophical reputation. At the age of twenty-five (1709), he wrote his first psychological work, *The Theory of Vision,* remarkable as the earliest attempt to distinguish in an act of vision between what we actually see with the eye and what we supply from former experience. In the following year, he published his *Principles of Human Knowledge,* containing views so original that they have become identified with his name. He frequently wrote in the form of dialogue, which indeed, as the great examples of Plato and Cicero prove, is well adapted to the purpose of philosophical discussion. His *Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher* is singularly delightful reading. It is a dialogue carried on between Dion, Euphranor, and Crito, the defenders of Christian doctrine and the principles of morals, and Alciphron and Lysicles, the representatives of free-thinking. It marks the author's share in the controversy of the Christian apologists with the school of writers known as the English *Deists.* Berkeley's style is as simple and sweet as his character was. His evangelican benevolence and his winning personal address made him many friends. His warm imagination often prevented him from arriving at sober philosophical conclusions. Something of this caprice of

imagination appears in his scheme to establish a sort of missionary college in the Isles of Bermuda for the purpose of converting and civilizing the Carib savages. He travelled on the Continent and lived some time in France. While at Paris, he visited Malebranche, then in ill health, from a disease of the lungs. A dispute ensued as to the ideal system, and Malebranche was so impetuous in argument, that he brought on a violent increase of his disorder, which carried him off in a few days.

21. — To the names above many others might be added, if we pretended to give a complete list of the writers who illustrated the literature of the first half of the eighteenth century, which is, as a whole, concentrated in London under the supremacy of Pope. Our aim being principally to show Pope's influence on his contemporaries, we are forced to confine our account to the most celebrated representatives of the literary life of this period. Besides the easy circumstances in which writers now found themselves, we may note another character of the time : this is the conflict between those who took the oath of the new dynasty and the Nonjurors who refused, the hot blood that it produced, the war between Dissent and Church, and between the Whigs and Tories. As we have

seen, this conflict occasioned a mass of political pamphlets, of which Daniel Defoe's and Swift's were the best; of songs and ballads, which were song in every street; of squibs, reviews, and satirical poems and letters. Almost every one joined in it, and it rose to importance in the work of the greater men who mingled literary studies with their political excitement. Thus the English *Augustan Age* was an age of unbridled slander. Literature was too often honoured for the sake of party, and personalities were sent to and fro like shots in battle. Criticism became active, and the form in which thought was expressed was especially dwelt on. The result was that the style of English prose became simple and clear, and English verse reached an exquisite neatness of expression and closeness of thought. But town society and artificial life being alone painted by this literature, country life and its interests were scarcely touched by it at all, and Nature, Passion, and Imagination decayed.

CHAPTER XII

The second half of the eighteenth century

1. — The figure of **Samuel Johnson** occupies among the writers of the second half of the eighteenth century the central place as that of Popes does among those of the first half. He was the son of a bookseller in Lichfield (Staffordshire), where he was born in 1709. In his father's shop he practised wide miscellaneous reading, and continued it in the library of Pembroke College, Oxford. He was there for only fourteen months, misfortunes in his father's trade compelling him to leave the university without a degree. He then had to struggle for many years against poverty, was usher in a grammar school, and then started a boarding-school, but failed. After this unsuccessful attempt, he went to London, accompanied by one of his pupils, the famous tragedian and dramatist David Garrick. He lived there in such a state of misery, that for want of a lodging he often passed his nights wandering about the streets. Nor was his bodily or mental constitution so healthful and

vigorous as to compensate for the frowns of fortune. He seems to have inherited from his mother's family the disease of scrofula, and was a prey to hypochondria. Religion happily sustained him and was ever the actuating principle of his life. He first became a contributor to different journals, particularly to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and soon emerged into popularity by his satire entitled *London* (1738), a poem in imitation of the third satire of Juvenal. In this he adapts the sentiments and topics of the Roman poet to the neglect of letters in London, and the humiliations which an honest man must encounter in a society where foreign quacks and native scoundrels could alone hope for success. The *Life of Savage*, an unhappy poet who wrote *The Bastard* and *The Wanderer*, increased Johnson's reputation, and in 1747 induced the chief booksellers in London to engage him to prepare a *Dictionary of the English Language*, for which he was to receive 1575 guineas (39,375 francs). The work was completed in 1755. When, on the eve of publication, Lord Chesterfield, a vain and ambitious man, assumed the part of great patron towards the author, and attempted to conciliate him by writing two papers in the periodical called *The World* in recommendation of the plan of the Dictionary, he received from him a

letter the composition of which as a keen and dignified expression of wounded pride is inimitable. Though, as it seems, this did Chesterfield injustice, it remains as a specimen of independence. We cannot help quoting a few lines of it : —

... Seven years, my lord, have now passed since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it at last to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour... The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is not very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron which Providence has enabled me to do for myself...

The etymological part of Johnson's dictionary is totally without value; but the interesting quotations adduced to exemplify the different senses of the words render it a book that may always be read with pleasure. It long occupied the place among the English of the Dictionary of the Academy in France.

2. — While his Dictionary was in progress, Johnson diverted his mind by the publication of

the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, a companion to his *London*, being a similar imitation of the tenth satire of Juvenal. He has reproduced with vigour the illustrations of the futility of those objects which men sigh for, literary, military, or poetical renown, beauty, wealth, long life, or splendid alliances; and he has added several of his own, where he shows a power and grandeur in no sense inferior to that of his Roman prototype. At about the same time (1749) he brought out upon the stage his tragedy of *Irene*, part of which he had written before he went to London. In spite of Garrick's friendly interest, it met with little acceptance and has never been revived. While still engaged in the composition of his Dictionary, he began in 1750 a periodical under the title of *The Rambler*. This he carried on single-handed twice a week for two years. With the *Rambler* may be said to terminate that series of periodical essay-writing, which exerted so powerful an influence on taste and manners in the eighteenth century. It was continued, it is true, with gradually increasing want of originality by other writers, till it finally died out with **Hawkesworth** (*The Adventurer*, from 1752 to 1754), **Moore** (*The World*, from 1753 to 1756), and **Bonnell Thornton** (*The Connoisseur*, from 1754 to

1756). In 1759 Johnson's mother died. In order to defray the expense of her funeral, and pay some little debts she had left, he wrote *Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia*, a prose tale which has been translated into most of the modern languages. " This tale, " says Boswell, " with all the charms of Oriental imagery, and all the force and beauty of which the English language his capable, leads us through the most important scenes of human life, and shows us that this stage of our being is full of " vanity and vexation of spirit. " It has been said that *Rasselas* and Voltaire's *Candide* travel nearly over the same ground. Nothing is more different than the tone of the tales. Each writer pictures a world full of evil and misery; but Voltaire founds on this common basis his sneers at religion and at the doctrine of an overruling Providence, while Johnson represents the darkest corners of the present life as irradiated by a compensating faith in immortality. One of Johnson's latest prose works is *The Lives of the Poets* (1780). It originated in the proposal made to him by several publishers that he should write a few lines of biographical and critical preface to the collected works of the English poets, of which they were preparing an edition. The task far outgrew the limits originally proposed, and furnished an inva-

luable series of literary portraits. Unfortunately it begins with Cowley's life, and therefore omits some of the greatest names in English literature; it gives place, moreover, to mere rhymesters, finds fault with Milton rather than praises him, and treats Gray with coarse insensibility. Johnson's health always was precarious. He however enjoyed happy days in the family of Mr. Thrale, an opulent brewer and member of the House of Commons, whose wife was equally famous for her own talents, and for the bright intellectual society she loved to assemble round her. He died in 1784. His poetry forms but a small portion of his works. His prose writings, and especially his essays, offer the best specimens of his manner. They sometimes rise to remarkable beauty and nobleness; but the style is cumbrous, antithetical, and pompous. His biography was written by James Boswell, who had accompanied him on a tour to the Hebrides in 1773. It appeared six years after his death and had an immense success. It has been republished again and again, and even in our days *Boswell's Life of Johnson* holds the first place among personal biographies.

3. — One of the most celebrated members of the literary club established by Johnson was **Oliver Goldsmith.** He was born in Ireland in 1728.

His father was a poor clérgyman of English extraction, struggling, with the aid of farming and a miserable stipend, to bring up a large family. He studied at the universities of Dublin, Edinburgh, and Leyden, with a view to the medical profession. But his eccentric character induced him abruptly to quit Leyden. Though he had but one shirt and no money, he intended to make the tour of Europe. He travelled through Flanders, part of France, Germany, Switzerland and Italy, often returning to peasants the obligation of a night's lodging, or a meal, by playing on a flute which he carried with him. He alludes to this in his *Traveller* : —

How often have I led thy sportive choir,
With tuneless pipe beside the murmuring Loire!
Where shading elms along the margin grew,
And freshened from the wave the zephyr flew;
And haply, though my harsh touch, falt'ring still,
But mocked all tune, and marred the dancer's skill,
Yet would the village praise my wondrous power,
And dance, forgetful of the noontide hour.

A few years after his return to England, he settled in London, and there emerged from obscurity, in 1765, by the publication of the poem we have just named, and of which Johnson said "that there had not been so fine a poem since Pope's time". He had written his *Vicar of Wakefield* in 1761, but he did not publish it till 1766, when his

name had obtained celebrity. This is the first English genuine novel of domestic life. By its picturesque presentation of the manners and feelings of simple people, it first led Goethe to turn with interest to the study of English literature. Though the story is put together in an inartificial, thoughtless, blundering way, it not only amuses us while we read, but takes root in the memory and affections as much almost as any story that was ever written. The style is harmonious and expressive, but the language is not always the best English, and the notion must be given up that the best book for beginners is the *Vicar of Wakefield.* In 1768, Goldsmith brought out his first comedy, the *Good-Natured Man,* and in 1773 his second, *She Stoops to Conquer.* The comedy of manners, as exemplified by Congreve and Farquhar, had degenerated into the genteel or sentimental comedy; Goldsmith's plays were a clever attempt to bring back the theatrical public to the old way of thinking, and to substitute innocent mirth for questionable sentimentality. In the *Good-Natured Man* appears the well-drawn character of Croaker. *She Stoops to Conquer* is founded on a ridiculous incident, two travelling parties mistaking a gentleman's house for an inn, an adventure which is said to have occurred to Goldsmith himself. The time between

the publication of these two comedies was partly devoted to the composition of the *Deserted Village*, one of the most popular poems in the English language. The axiom which political economists dispute, viz., that luxury is hurtful to nations, is illustrated by Goldsmith with all the effect of poetical beauty and excellence. Let us quote only the lines in which he bewails the extension of the English and Irish *latifundia* (1), and the decay of the peasantry : —

> Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
> Where wealth accumulates, and men decay :
> Princes and lords may flourish or may fade;
> A breath can make them, as a breath has made :
> But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
> When once destroyed, can never be supplied.

Goldsmith did much other work with his pen, wrote histories of Greece, Rome and England, an *Enquiry into the present state of Polite Learning in England*, etc. He died in 1774, at the age of forty-six. His fame has been constantly on the increase. John Forster, the historian, produced his biography, in 1854, under the title of *The Life and Times of Oliver Goldsmith*, a valuable and interesting book.

(1) The name given to the vast landed estates of the Roman nobles.

4.—In poetry, besides Johnson's and Goldsmith's works, there are a few others to be mentioned. **Gray**'s *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard* (1750) abounds with images which find a mirror in every mind, and with sentiments to which every bosom returns an echo. The ode *On a distant Prospect of Eton College*, by the same author, is also an excellent piece. **Edward Young**'s *Odes* are worth very little; his *Night Thoughts* deserve more praise. Young was warmly attached to his wife and to her two sons by a former marriage. The wife of one of these, her husband, and Mrs. Young herself died within a few years. To these successive bereavements, and to the anxiety of the poet on behalf of his own son, we owe the *Night Thoughts*, their gloom and sadness (1742-1746). By this work Young has founded a school of sorrows and reveries of which Herder is one of the most famous representatives. The Odes of **William Collins**, published in 1746, are much better than those of Young, and give their author a high place among minor poets. **Beattie's** *Minstrel* (1771-1774) sometimes rises to manly force and dignity; its design was to trace the progress of a poetical genius, from the first dawning of fancy and reason till that period at which he may be supposed capable of appearing in the world

as a minstrel. The chord is that struck by Rousseau, the superiority of simple unbought pleasures to luxury and pomp, of nature to art, etc. A satire on the University of Oxford, entitled *Isis*, *The English Garden*, which is a descriptive poem, a number of odes and other shorter pieces, gave **Mason** (1725-1797) in his days a great reputation, but at the present day are scarcely known. He wrote the dramas of *Elfrida* and *Caractacus* on the model of the classic writers. *Douglas*, a tragedy of **Home** (1757) has survived; the other attempts of this author were failures. The best comedies of the time are those of Sheridan, *The Rivals* (1775), *The School for Scandal* (1777), *The Critic* (1779), etc. **Garrick** (1716-1779), the manager of the tragic stage in this period, was the cause of its regaining a portion of its former dignity. He is the most celebrated actor that ever appeared on the English stage, and was descended from a French family who fled to England on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Regarded as a whole, the time which extends from Pope to the restoration of poetry by Cowper, has bequeathed to us scarcely any poetry which deserves to be remembered. "Two or three hundred lines of Gray", says Lord Macaulay, " twice as many of Goldsmith, a few stanzas of Beattie and Collins, a few

strophes of Mason, and a few clever prologues and satires were the masterpieces of this age ". This eminent critic ascribes that barrenness to the classical correctness of the school founded by Pope. Men, indeed, became tired of conformity to a standard which too often did not derive its authority from nature and reason, and they longed for any thing which could break the so called monotony of the correct school. We now leave poetry, and return to a more flourishing kind of writing in the second half of the eighteenth century, viz., the novel.

5. — Besides Johnson's *Rasselas* and Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*, many other novels of this period are still read in our days. The series began in 1740, with **Richardson**'s *Pamela*, the heroine of which is a simple and innocent country girl, whose virtue a dissolute master assails by all the arts of seduction, but who conquers him at last by persevering in the paths of rectitude. The popularity of *Pamela* was so great that it ran through five editions in one year, being recommended even from the pulpit. This novel was followed at long intervals by *Clarissa Harlowe* (1748) and *Sir Charles Grandison* (1754). Richardson is the originator of the novel of high life, nearly all his characters being taken from the *upper ten thou-*

sand. **Henry Fielding,** his contemporary, was the novelist of the middle classes of society. In 1742, he wrote his *Joseph Andrews* to turn *Pamela* into ridicule. His *Tom Jones* (1749) has been pronounced by Macaulay and other critics the best English novel, and *Amelia* (1751) was the admiration of Dr Johnson. It is a pity that these novels cannot be read aloud in any family circle; they contain so many passages of needless and offensive coarseness. Between the publication of *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*, there appeared a third novelist, **Smollet,** whose works are also disfigured by many licentious pages. Like Fielding, he sought merely to show the age its likeness without any concern to improve it. His chief novels are *Roderick Random* (1748), *Peregrine Pickle* (1751), and *Humphrey Clinker* (1771). He is full of wit and humour, and possesses a wonderful power of representing the pathetic and horrible. He copied Le Sage, with English tastes, and has himself had many copiers. As he goes to the utmost limits of realistic humour, so we find **Laurence Sterne** as the representative of the most extreme idealistic humour. His *Tristram Shandy* was begun in 1759 and finished in 1767. This novel has no interest of plot or of incident; its merit and value lie, partly in the humour with which the characters are

drawn and contrasted, partly in that other kind of humour which displays itself in unexpected transitions and curious trains of thought. The work immediately became popular, and its author famous. He was *fêted* by noblemen, while at the same time he was fiercely attacked in the newspapers. Sterne spent some years in travelling on the Continent. His *Sentimental Journey* (1768) is a narrative of a tour in France and Italy. The book is a product of the sentimentalism which infected the upper classes of that time; it is for England what Goethe's *Sorrows of Werther* (Werthers Leiden) was for Germany, the most remarkable illustration of a social sickliness produced by satiety and inactivity. The style reminds us of the chief sentimental writings of Rousseau. The worst license of indelicacy and a positive dirtiness prevent honest people from reading any longer some parts of Sterne's works.

A few secondary names deserve to be added in the department of fictitious narrative. **Frances Burney** (Madame d'Arblay) created a sensation by her novels *Evelina* (1778), *Cecilia* (1782), and *Camilla* (1796). **William Godwin** published in 1794 *The Adventures of Caleb Williams*, an impassioned attack upon society, as if it were then so fatally disordered as to require reconstruction *from top to bottom*. A revival of the romance of

the middle ages was attempted, but remained unsuccessful. **Horace Walpole** wrote in 1765 a satire upon novels of this class, *The Castle of Otranto*. Numberless readers, however, took for a serious production of the new romantic school a book in which the hero is locked up in an enormous helmet, the nose of a statue drops blood, a sword can only be lifted by the combined strength of a hundred men, etc.

6. — It is not by his *Castle of Otranto* that Horace Walpole holds a significant place in British literature, but by his *Memoirs* and his *Letters*. Both are pictures of society and manners composed of wit and gaiety, shrewd observation, sarcasm, censoriousness, and sparkling language. Though he scoffed at literary fame, and wished to pass for a mere idle gentleman, he troubled himself more than any other writer about the appearance which his works, and especially his letters, would present before posterity. He resembled, according to Lord Macaulay, M. Jourdain's father, who sold cloth without derogating from his character of *Gentilhomme*. "Lui, marchand? c'est pure médisance, il ne l'a jamais été. Tout ce qu'il faisait, c'est qu'il était fort obligeant, fort officieux; et, comme il se connaissait fort bien en étoffes, il en allait choisir de tous les côtés, les faisait apporter chez lui, et

en donnait à ses amis pour de l'argent. " A few other letter writers may be mentioned. **Lady Mary Montagu**, the English Madame de Sévigné, furnishes in her correspondence most agreeable reading, describing travels, foreign fashions and manners in a graphic and polished style. Her letters constitute four volumes, and were printed in 1763, two years after her death. **Lord Chesterfield's** letters to his natural son, Philip Stanhope, were published in 1773, soon after the writer's death in the same year. Johnson, who never forgave Lord Chesterfield for having treated him, at a time when he stood in great need of patronage, with coldness and neglect, said that the letters " taught the moral of a courtesan, and the manners of a dancing-master. " Our Sainte-Beuve, in his *Causeries du lundi* (1) finds such a judgment extremely unjust. He thinks that, if Chesterfield insists upon graces of manner at any price, and opens up to his son a whole world of *savoir-vivre*, it is because he has already provided for the more solid parts of education. Is it not a subject worthy of a father's solicitude to enforce with grace and propriety good conduct in little things, and self-denial in trifles? For instance : —

(1) *T. II, p. 176,* 2e édition. Paris, Garnier.

Never maintain an argument with heat and clamour, though you think or know yourself to be in the right, but give your opinion modestly and coolly, which is the only way to convince; and, if that does not do, try to change the conversation by saying with good humour : "We shall hardly convince one another, nor is it necessary that we should; so let us talk of something else."

During the years 1769-1772 a series of letters appeared in the *Public Advertiser*, in which ministers found proofs of some enemy, some spy, being amongst them. They were signed *Junius*, a pseudonym, and criticized the whole administration more deeply and severely than had ever been done before this time. The opinion of the best judges, and especially that of Lord Macaulay, in his Essay on Warren Hastings, is that Sir **Philip Francis**, a leading member in the House of Commons, was Junius.

6. — The *Letters of Junius* rise to political eloquence. In this department the era under notice was a great one. Perhaps no country in the world ever possessed at one time such a group of orators as that whose voices were heard during these fifty years. Among the earliest who used the power of speech for the public discussion of political questions was the first **William Pitt,** afterwards **Earl of Chatham** (1708-1778). For many years he continued one of the most influential men of his

time. When upwards of sixty, and enfeebled by disease, he delivered his speech against the employment of the Indians in the American War. What noble ideas it contains!

... Who is the man that in addition to the disgraces and mischiefs of the war, has dared to authorize and associate to our arms the tomahawk and scalping-knife of the savage; to call into civilized alliance the wild and inhuman inhabitant of the woods; to delegate to the merciless Indian the defence of disputed rights, and to wage the horrors of his barbarous war against our brethren?...

In 1778, Chatham, though ill unto death, went to the House of Commons to rouse the country against what he deemed the ignominious surrender of part of America, and to pray that if England must fall, she might fall with honour.

Perhaps more eloquent and certainly more philosophic than Chatham was **Edmund Burke** (1730-1797). Modern criticism is disposed to compare him with Cicero. It would not be possible to find political writings more suggestive than his of lessons applicable to all times. Among his greatest efforts are the speeches delivered in 1788 on the impeachment of Warren Hastings. The year before **Sheridan** (1751-1817) had delivered on the conduct of the same governor-general to the Begums of Oude a speech which appears to have made a

more profound and permanent impression upon the hearers than any speech recorded in the annals of Parliament. The trial of Warren Hastings also gave scope for the talents and eloquence of **Charles James Fox** (1749-1806). To the four names just mentioned must be added those of **Erskine, Pitt,** and **Grattan,** whose orations our limits do not permit us to notice.

7.—The second half of the eighteenth century is not only the great age of English eloquence, but also that of historical composition. **David Hume** (1711-1776) published between the years 1754 and 1762 his *History of England*, a work which, in spite of manifold defects, has a charm which few historians had been able to command, until one arose in our own day—Macaulay—who has made history as attractive as romance. It is to be noted that the influence of Voltaire's *Siècle de Louis XIV* and *Essai sur les mœurs* is clearly noticeable in Hume's later volumes. In these more perhaps than in the former, the author is to be read with distrust on questions that affect religion. Hume was a Scotchman, and so was his friend, another great historian, **William Robertson** (1721-1793). Being a clergyman ordained to the charge of a small parish, Robertson had but light duties, which left him ample time for study. In 1759 appeared

his *History of Scotland during the Reigns of Queen Mary and King James VI.;* it procured for him a brilliant reputation, which, however, scarcely spread beyond the borders of his own country. His *History of the Emperor Charles V.* (1769) and his *History of America* (1777), which grew naturally out of the *History of Charles*, extended his fame to foreign lands, principally to France. The causes of Robertson's extraordinary success are the correctness and perspicuity of his style, the accuracy of his research, the comprehensiveness of his views, his singular insight into political transactions, and the management of his narrative so as to excite the interest of a dramatic plot. His style is rather of a Latin turn, and is not distinctively idiomatic. Being a Scotchman and always living at home, he had no opportunities of hearing English as it was spoken, and learned it almost as a foreign language from books. The wonder is that he succeeded in freeing himself so completely from peculiar Scotch idioms. The first year of the last quarter of the eighteenth century witnessed the death of Hume and the publication of the first volume of **Gibbon**'s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.* "It was at Rome", says the author, "on the 15th of October 1764, as I sat *musing* amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the

bare-footed friars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started to my mind". He had read the works of Bossuet and was influenced by their spirit and their style, and became for a year or more a Roman Catholic. He wrote in a copious and splendid manner; his style, as Latin as that of Robertson, has more wealth of mind and richness of expression. As regards the peculiar opinions of his work, its attacks on Christianity and a certain revelling in licentious and disgusting details, are blots on its great literary achievement. To historical composition belongs **Thomas Warton**'s important work, the *History of English Poetry* (1774-1778). In it is traced the stream of poetry in England from its first fountain-springs down to the reign of Elizabeth. The work is a storehouse of facts connected with early English literature. It is to be regretted that Warton's plan excluded the drama. This defect has been partly supplied by Mr. **John Payne Collier**'s *History of Dramatic Poetry to the Time of Shakespeare* (1831).

8. — Historical literature in the second half of the eighteenth century generally bears a philosophical character, and one of the most celebrated historians was at the same time a celebrated philo-

sopher. It was David Hume. His chief philosophical works consist of *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary;* and of the *Inquiry concerning Human Understanding* and other treatises, the whole of which are a revised condensation of the *Treatise on Human Nature,* written in France. Apart from sceptical puzzles, Hume's thoughts are often profound and suggestive, while his style is remarkably clear and flowing. The Scotch or common-sense school made a reaction against the scepticism of Hume. Its rise dates from the appearance, in 1764, of **Reid**'s *Inquiry into the Human Mind.* This school has received ample justice at the hands of Cousin in his *Cours de Philosophie moderne.* One of Reids' most intelligent scholars, Dr. **James Beattie,** wrote in reply to Hume, in 1770, his *Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth in Opposition to Sophistry and Scepticism.* Among Reid's ablest disciples was **Dugald Stewart,** who contributed to make Scottish metaphysics world-famous. He wrote at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, and found French translators in Farcy and Jouffroy. To philosophy belongs **Adam Smith**'s *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759). By the same author we have the well-known book entitled *An Inquiry into the Nature*

and Causes of the Wealth of Nations (1776), which, if it did not invent, at least enlarged, simplified, and systematized the science of political economy.

9. — There is in the eighteenh century between philosophy and theology a link which forces us to devote a few lines to the latter. The school of writers known as the English Deists had begun to appear about the beginning of the century; open or covert attacks upon Christianity had unceasingly proceeded from it and spread not only all over England, but also over France. Bentley, Berkeley, Bishop **Butler** (1692-1752), and others, issued apologetic publications in which they protested against the anti-Christian writers. These were followed by the famous treatise of Bishop **Warburton,** the *Divine Legation of Moses* (1743), by which the controversy was decided. Deism fell into disrepute in England about the middle of the century. But in France the works of some of the English Deists became known through the translations of Diderot and the Encyclopaedists, and cooperated with those of Voltaire in causing the outburst of irreligion which followed the Revolution of 1789. Bentley, Berkeley, Butler and Warburton were Protestant. On the Catholic side we find **Challoner,** who passed many years of his

life in the English college at Douay, and revised both the Old and the New Testament. Among his numerous works, none has a higher value than the *Memoirs of Missionary Priests, and others of both Sexes, who suffered on Account of their Religion from 1577 to 1688.* It contains numberless details which would otherwise have been lost. Thirteen years before, he had written his *Catholic Christian Instructed,* for which he was denounced as an enemy to his country, and obliged to abscond. This was a reply to Middleton's famous *Letter from Rome,* in which the author attempted to derive all the ceremonies of the Roman ritual from the Pagan religion which it had supplanted. Challoner's book declared that Middleton's assertions were in part untrue, in part true, but not to the purpose of his argument, since an external resemblance between a Pagan and a Christian rite was of no importance, provided the inward meaning of the two were different.

10. —As a whole, the period we are treating of was not less fruitful in general intellectual eminence than the brilliant age of Anne; but true literary glory faded away into a dim twilight which left no vivid impression. The public seemed to be tired of the reigning classical form, and cared little for those who pursued it. The governing class,

the king, and the nobles, concurred in disparaging literature. Some were beset by material enjoyments and pleasures; others were absorbed in politics. Pitt's words and actions were watched more closely by all England than the works of the best writers. Burke, Fox, and Sheridan, were regarded with awe, and classical authors put aside. Five lines of barbarous Latin in Magna Charta, which secured the personal liberty of the Englishman, were worth more than the writings of all poets together. A literary revolution had become necessary, if mind and heart were to be won anew for art in the expression of high thought. This revolution was at hand towards the end of the eighteenth century.

CHAPTER XIII

Revolution in Poetry in Modern Times

1. — It was at the time when the diction and versification of English poetry were classically most correct, that the minds of men most eagerly began to crave fore something new. Any thing which could break the monotony of the correct

school became acceptable; hence the success of some impostors, such as **Macpherson, Chatterton,** the members of the **Della Crusca School,** and **Ireland.** Macpherson published in 1760 a series of poems professedly translated from the Gaelic language, and in 1762 *Fingal,* an epic poem in six books by Ossian, a Gaelic poet said to have lived in the 3rd century. Though Dr. Johnson treated him as an impostor, his forgeries were immensely popular. Those of Chatterton did not less deceive the scholars of that day. This youth of seventeen invented a series of mock antique poems, which he ascribed to an imaginary monk of Bristol, named Thomas Rowley, and who lived, he said, in the fifteenth century. The Della Cruscans, some English residents at Florence, printed sentimental poetry and prose of an inferior and insipid style, in 1785. Coming to London and publishing their lucubrations, they for a time created a *furore* among certain literary circles and were regarded as reformers in literature. The Della Crusca poetry had its proper and natural sequel in the Shakespeare Papers (1795). William Henry Ireland conceived the idea of forging various papers among which was a complete tragedy called *Vortigern.* He declared they had been discovered, and were in the handwriting of Shakespeare. The great

works of the old masters were attracting more and more of the admiration which they deserved. **Thomas Percy** by his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), and Thomas Warton by his above mentioned *History of English Poetry* had made the people love them well, though not wisely. The proof appears clearly enough from the fact that many persons occupying high positions in the literary world mistook impostures for really valuable productions. A revolution had become necessary; it took the shape of a feeling for nature, and was begun by Burns and Cowper.

2. — **Robert Burns** is the national poet of Scotland. He was born in 1759. His father being a poor gardener, he had only the scantiest education, with hard labour and hard living. In the county school he acquired a knowledge of the English language, to which he subsequently added a limited acquaintance with Latin and French. He was early noted among his neighbours for his verses. His muse found its voice in an affair of the heart. His poems circulated in manuscript through the country, and were admired by his rural readers. In 1786 he published a volume in order to defray his expenses to the West Indies. He was prepared to quit his native land, when a few influential men in Edinburgh invited him to pay a visit to the

Scottish metropolis. During the winter 1786-1787, our ploughman, then in his twenty-eighth year, was the lion of Edinburgh society. Dr. Robertson, Dugald Stewart, **Henry Mackenzie,** a Scotch novelist and essayist, and other men of note, felt a pleasure in drawing crowds round the rustic poet, whose conversational abilities struck his auditors with as much surprise as they had experienced from the perusal of his verse. At Edinburgh Burns unfortunately acquired those habits of intemperance which carried him off at Dumfries at the early age of thirty-seven years (1796). His writings are chiefly lyric, consisting of love songs of inimitable excellence. But he has also produced works either of a narrative or satirical character. His *Tam o' Shanter* is a master-piece of poetic narrative; it is a tale of popular witch-superstition. Another remarkable poem, half narrative, but studded with songs, is *The Jolly Beggars.* Scottish patriotism is admirably expressed in Burns' manly lines supposed to be addressed by Bruce to his army before the battle of Bannockburn (1314). His themes are such as all can comprehend; his teachers were nature and life alone. His breathing and vivifying spirit had a lasting influence on English poets, which is principally sensible in the philosophy of Wordsworth, in the lyrics of Campbell, and in the pa-

triotic melodies of Moore. It must be owned that in his poetry, as in his life, there is much that is impure, the utterance of sensual passion. Nothing, however, is mean or ignoble. Some most pathetic penitential utterances may well soften hard thoughts, and abate the severity of censure. His speech is simple and true. As it is in the Scottish dialect, it is not easily understood by French readers.

3.—The other forerunner of the great restoration of English poetry was **William Cowper.** He was an Englishman, born in Hertfordshire in 1731. His delicate constitution, nervousness and *mauvaise honte*, rendered school a place of complete torture to him, and prevented him from earning a livelihood by reading the titles of bills in the House of Lords. He happily contracted a close friendship with Mrs. Unwin, a blind old lady, and with John Newton, an evangelical divine, and owed to their tender affection most of the happiness and peace of his life. He began to cultivate poetry merely as a pastime, but the originality of his genius soon acquired popularity, and he pursued as a profession what he had at first taken up as a diversion. The first volume of his poems was published in 1782; it contained some didactic compositions, entitled, *Table Talk*, *The Progress of Error*, *Truth*, *Hope*, *Charity*, *Conversation*, *Reti-*

rement, etc. *Tirocinium*, an attack on the public-school system, on the ground of its demoralizing influence and character, appeared in 1784. These is a beautiful tribute to John Bunyan, whom he will not name, lest a name then generally despised should awaken only derision. The *Task* appeared in 1785. This it at once a descriptive, moral and satirical poem, in six books. It sprang out of the suggestion of Lady Austen, one of Cowper's friends, who asked him to try his hand at blank verse by writing a poem on a *sofa*. Fancy bears the poet away to Nature, the free communion with which was the only thing that could make him happy. Many of Cowper's songs and shorter lyrics are elegant and sportive. His beautiful lines *On the Receipt of my Mother's Picture* will ever be read with deligt. Let us transcribe some of them : —

> Oh that those lips had language! Life has passed
> With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
> Those lips are thine — thy own sweet smiles I see,
> The same that oft in childhood solaced me;
> Voice only fails, else, how distinct they say :
> " Grieve not, my child; chase all thy fears away! "
> The meek intelligence of those dear eyes —
> Blest be the art that can immortalize,
> The art that baffles time's tyrannic claim
> To quench it — here shines on me still the same.
> ....
> ....

My mother! when I learned that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?
Perhaps thou gavest me, though unseen, a kiss;
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss —
Ah, that maternal smile! it answers, yes.
I heard the bell tolled on thy burial-day,
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
And turning from my nursery window, drew
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!
But was it such? It was. Where thou art gone,
Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
The parting sound shall pass my lips no more.
....
....

Cowper found poetry feeble, artificial, and altogether nerveless. He pcssessed the talents which fitted him for the task of raising it from its abasement, viz., warmth of feeling, vigour of thought, and manliness of taste. He wrote concerning things the thoughts of which set his heart on fire, and thus what he wrote had that grace which sincerity and passion impart to the most homely compositions. He was not among those who deplored the absence of an unreal mistress in melodious common-places. Instead of raving about imaginary Chloes, he wrote of Mrs. Unwins' knitting-needles. The quiet home circle of middle English life, the tea-table, the

hearth, have derived from him beauty and dignity. He is the painter of domestic life, and his writings have become closely interwoven with the tissue of English household existence. In short, his great merit consists in the contempt which he felt for the mechanical art of the poetasters who were in fashion in England, and in the audacity with which he carried the dominion of poetry into the regions of nature and truth.

4. — Burns died in 1796 and Cowper in 1800, both at the end of the eighteenth or towards the beginning of the nineteenth century. They brought poetry back to Nature. Nature kindly received the nurslings and took delight in multiplying them in a way she had scarcely done in the Elizabethan age. In about the last ten years of the eighteenth century, there were in England, not to mention minor names, at least nine or ten poetical writers, each commanding universal attention from the reading world to whatever he produced : —Crabbe (to take them in the order of their seniority), Wordsworth, Scott, Coleridge, Southey, Campbell, Moore, Byron, Shelley, and Keats. The new school opposed to the mechanical school which Pope's successors had made intolerable, a counter theory of the poetic function, which me may call the theory of the *spontaneous*. As light flows from the

stars, or perfume from the flowers — as the nightingale cannot help singing, nor the bee refrain from making honey; — so, according to this theory, poetry is the spontaneous emanation of a musical and beautiful soul; in a poet, effort is tantamount to condemnation. If upon real genius the theory acted for good, it also acted for evil. No extensive and complex poem was ever composed without much labour. Even Shakespeare, whom it is — or was — the fashion to consider as a wild, irregular poet, writing from impulse, and careless of art, is known to have carefully altered and re-arranged some of his plays — *Hamlet*, for instance — and by so doing to have greatly raised their poetic value. Many of the poems produced by the new school were not, with respect to their forms, of the highest order, and owing to a want of due pains in construction were not commensurate with the power that was in their authors.

5. — As the revolution begun by Burns and Cowper was carried on principally by the group of poets who formed the so called **Lake School,** we will devote a few pages to the study of the works of that school and their influence on English poetry. The three great Lake poets were Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey.

William Wordsworth was born in Cum-

berland in 1770. Having completed his studies and taken his degree at Cambridge, he made the tour of France and Switzerland at a period (1791-92) when the Revolution in France had attained its grand crisis. He hailed it with feelings of enthusiastic admiration, believing it would open a new era of liberty and happiness. After his return, he published in 1793 his first productions, two poems in the heroic couplet, entitled respectively, *An Evening Walk: Addressed to a Young Lady*, and *Descriptive Sketches, Taken during a Pedestrian Tour among the Alps*. When Coleridge became acquainted with the *Descriptive Sketches* he declared that seldom, if ever, had appearance of an original poetic genius been more plainly announced. It was in 1796 that the two poets became personally known to each other. In 1798 they made a tour together in Germany. In the same year Wordsworth published his *Lyrical Ballads*. His next publication was in 1807, when he printed in two volumes a variety of poems composed in preceding years. Meanwhile he had married, and had retired to his native Lakes, to lead among their quiet beauties the tranquil life he deemed alone suitable to the poetic nature. Southey's subsequent retirement to the same part of *the country*, and Coleridge's frequent visits to it,

gave rise to the name applied to the three poets and their followers. In 1814 Wordsworth published the *Excursion,* a poem in blank verse forming the second part of a poem in three parts, to be entitled *The Recluse*, which the author had at one time contemplated, and called by this name as having for its principal subject the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement. The third part was only planned; of the first, only one book was ever written. A long poem, *The Prelude,* written in 1804, but published after Wordsworth's death, was intended as an introduction to the *Recluse.* The whole would have been a philosophical poem, containing views of man, nature, and society. This great work the author himself compared to a Gothic church, the *Prelude* to the ante-chapel of the church, and all his minor poems to the little cells, oratories, and sepulchral recesses ordinarily included in such edifices. The best way to understand the revolution effected by Wordsworth in the state of English poetry would be to notice the exact tenor of certain propositions advanced and illustrated by him in his various Prefaces and Dissertations between 1800, when the second edition of his *Lyrical Ballads* was printed, and 1820. Here we can only give a few hints of his theory. Il was that poetry should take for its

subjects the commonest things, and be written in the simplest style. Wordsworth was the poet of Nature and Man. To him, there was a soul in all nature which had powers and desires, feeling and thoughts of its own; and by these it gave education, impulse, comfort and joy to the man who opened his heart to receive them; and from receiving these impressions into the mind and reflecting on them, and adding thoughts and feelings of his own, a complete harmony between Nature and Man was to arise. Among the works which followed the *Excursion* may be mentioned the *White Doe of Rylstone*, and several series of *Sonnets*, these latter being among the finest and most sonorous things in the English language. His influence extended far and wide, and for many years he enjoyed that guerdon of love and admiration which is ordinarily reserved for departed genius. He died in 1850, after completing his eightieth year, survived by one only of the ten great poets named above, viz., by Moore.

6. — Wordsworth's, most intimate poetical friend was **Coleridge** (1772-1834). He came to Cambridge immediately after Wordsworth had left it, and there became acquainted with his first publications. He gave his adhesion to those principles on which Worsworth professed to write, by

the fact of his association with him in the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* (1800). The *Ancient Mariner* appeared in companionship with those ballads. The two friends lived together some years in the Lake District. In 1810 Coleridge went to London, where he spent the rest of his life. His literary character is tinged with something of the German intellect : he thought much and intensely, all his days he was labouring, meditating, and gathering masses of principles; but he was not a man capable of producing many complete and compact works. His poetical writings are various in style and manner. The most original and striking is his well-known tale of the *Ancient Mariner*, the hero of which brings terrible sufferings on himself and his companions through having cruelly killed an albatross. His *Christabel* is an unfinished romantic supernatural tale. His *Genevieve* is a pure and exquisite love poem. Among the finest of his lyrics are the ode *On the Departing Year*, that supposed to be written *At Sunrise in the Valley of Chamouni*, and that *To France*. He was attached, when a young man, to the principles of the French Revolution, and his enthusiasm burst out in beautiful lines : —

When France in wrath her giant-limbs upreared,
And with that oath which smote air, earth, and sea,

Stamped her strong foot, and said she would be free,
Bear witness for me, how I hoped and feared! etc.

Coleridge translated Schiller's *Wallenstein,* into which he threw some of the finest graces of his own fancy. He had no power of true dramatic creation. His tragedy of the *Remorse* neither excites curiosity nor moves any strong degree of pity. Though unsuccessful in creating emotions of a theatrical kind, he was a perfect critic of the dramatic productions of others. In his lectures on Shakespeare he has done more to give an idea of the genius of that poet than any other Englishman. He first showed that the creator of *Hamlet* and *Othello* was not only the greatest genius, but also the most consummate artist that ever existed. Throughout his life his reputation was founded less upon his writings than upon his conversation. More than once has he said that, with pen in hand, he felt a thousand checks and difficulties in the expression of his meaning; but that he never experienced the smallest impediment in the full utterance of his most subtle fancies by word of mouth. His imperfectley reported conversations, his casual remarks scribbled often on the margin of books, and other innumerable fragments, were published posthumously under the title of *Literary Remains*.

7. — **Robert Southey** (1774-1843), has been popularly reckoned one of the Lake poets; but it is difficult to assign any meaning to that name which would make it applicable to him. He was, it is true, in the commencement of his career, the associate of Wordsworth, and afterwards took up his residence in the Lake District. In his first volume of minor poems, also published in 1796, there was something of the same simplicity or plainness of style, and choice of subjects from humble life, by which Wordsworth sought to distinguish himself about the same time; but whatever gave its peculiar character to Wordsworth's poetry, was wanting in Southey's. When twenty years of age, he enthusiastically expressed his sympathy with the French Revolution, and wrote the dramatic sketch of *Wat Tyler,* a highly explosive production. Later on he took an opposite direction, as Wordsworth and Coleridge did; and when, in 1813, he accepted the office of poet-laureate, his apostasy became complete. Southey early turned to epic poetry. At about the time when he composed *Wat Tyler,* he published his first epic poem, *Joan of Arc,* full of the same political sentiments and ardour. It was followed by another, *Thalaba the Destroyer,* an Arabian narrative in irreguler unrhymed verse; and by a third, the *Curse of Kehama*, of the same

class and structure as *Thalaba,* but in rhyme, gathering up the life of India into a brilliant picture. His latest epic was *Roderick, the Last of the Goths;* it is in blank verse, and is founded on the punishment and the repentance of the last Gothic king of Spain. His courtly strains as poet-laureate tended little to advance his reputation, and the famous *Vision of Judgment* would have passed into utter oblivion, had not Lord Byron published another *Vision of Judgment,* a powerful production in which the laureate received a merciless and witty castigation. The latest of Southey's poetical works was a volume of narrative verse, *All for Love,* and the *Pilgrim of Compostella.* His poems are a small portion of his writings. He published innumerable articles in Reviews, filled volumes with the results of his reading and thought on morals, philosophy, politics, and literature. All his works are remarkable for the purity and the vigour of their English. Yet he was one of the least popular authors of his age; and time, instead of changing the national verdict, has confirmed it. Probably the only work which will keep Southey's name before the latest generation of readers is his *Life of Nelson.*

8. — Southey kept up a pretty constant correspondence with **Walter Scott,** who procured for

him the laureateship after having declined it for himself. This latter writer contributed largely to the consummation of the revolution in English poetry which took place after the death of Cowper. He was born at Edinburgh in 1771, and was the son of a writer to the signet (advocate). A lameness in one foot which came upon him in infancy induced his friends to send him into the country, and his boyhood was spent near Kelso, in the south-east of Scotland, amidst beautiful scenery full of legendary traditions. There he first became acquainted with Percy's *Reliques,* and that work acted upon his fancy, exciting an intense love for poetry, and especially for poetry of the ballad form. When he was a lad of sixteen, just removed from the High School of Edinburgh to a desk in his father's office, he was invited to an evening party by one of his friends, and met Burns, who prophesied that the youngster had a brilliant future before him. " You'll be a man yet, sir ", said he, and thus he gave him the *literary ordination.* Though his father made him his clerk for five years, and then a lawyer at the highest court of justice at Edinburgh, he continued his historical and imaginative reading, revelling in old popular songs, romances of chivalry, and the history of his country during the middle ages. Meanwhile he acquired a taste for German

literature, which was then beginning .to attract attention under the patronage of **Henry Mackenzie** (1745-1831), a novelist, author of the *Man of Feeling* (1771). His genius was silent until he had grown to manhood, and first appeared in the translation of Bürger's *Lenore* and the *Wild Huntsman*, and of Goethe's *Goetz von Berlichingen* and the *Erlking*. He then wandered through the Scottish border-country, in pursuance of a plan he had already formed for collecting Border ballads. In 1802 the result appeared in the publication of the *Minstrelsy of the Scottisch Border*, containing some forty pieces, many of which are original. The work made his name known all over Great Britain. Three years later, the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* stamped him as a true poet. This was followed in 1808 by *Marmion*, the best of his chivalrous poems, and in 1810 by the *Lady of the Lake*, which was still more popular than its predecessors. His other poems, which came in quick succession, are much inferior. The public, besides, were growing weary of his style, and began to turn to the genius of Byron. Scott was too wise and too generous to complain, and resolved to try his hand at a new kind of composition.

9. — His novels were destined to overshadow

his fame as a poet. They are more strikingly original, more unique in literature. The form of the prose story, admitting readily of narrative details, and allowing the author to explain remote allusions as he advances, was better adapted for giving free play to Scott's tastes and materials than poetry. He began the long series of his prose tales in 1814 with *Waverley*. This was published anonymously, as were the rest of the series, *Guy Mannering*, the *Antiquary*, *Old Mortality*, *Rob Roy*, etc., which appeared before 1819. During the next seven years his rapid pen produced the *Bride of Lammermoor*, *Ivanhoe*, the *Abbot*, *Kenilworth*, *Quentin Durward*, etc. In 1826 came the downfall of Scott's fortune. He had been in partnership since 1805 with the Ballantynes, who were printers. The commercial distresses of 1825-26 fell upon them, and Scott was involved in their bankcruptcy. His liabilities amounted to above £ 140,000 (3,500,000 francs). The fruits of his labour were gone. With rare courage and a healthy pride he faced the hard fact. He undertook to liquidate his debts by intellectual labours alone. The novels, however, and other works composed from that hour manifest a proprogressive decline of power. *Woodstock* was in preparation at the time when the stroke came; it was succeeded by the *Fair Maid* of Perth, Anne

of Geierstein, etc. In 1827 Scott published a *Life of Napoleon Bonaparte*, from 1828 to 1830 the *Tales of a Grandfather*, in 1830 the amusing *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*. His debts were greatly reduced in his lifetime, and were subsequently discharged by the profits on his works. Undermined and worn out by care and excessive toil, he went to Italy in the summer of 1832; but his strength continued to decline, and he hastened back to his native land. He died in the same year on the 21st of September, in the midst of his children, at Abbotsford on the banks of the Tweed, in that baronial residence where he had received innumerable visitors — princes, peers, and poets — men of all ranks and grades. As a poet, he is unequivocally original; for there is no model upon which the form of his principal poems has been moulded. Though he has a wonderful fertility and vivacity, he is not among the greatest English poets, and there are critics who would rather have written one song of Burns than all his epics. But he is in his way the greatest English novelist. It is his glory that by nice attention to costume and character in his novels, he has raised them to historic importance without impairing their interest as works of art. No writer exercised so great an influence over the public mind, not only in

Great Britain, but also in the whole civilized world. His heroes and heroines have become household words in Italy, France, and Germany, as well as in England, and the painter, the sculptor, the engraver, the musician, have sought inspiration from his pages. As a man, he was a noble and generous nature. Though Byron had made him the object of a petulant and unfounded invective, he received him without the slightest feeling of bitterness and made him his intimate friend. Of Coleridge he always spoke with interest and admiration, and endeavoured to serve him more than once. With Southey he constantly exchanged friendly letters, and besides served him in other ways, principally by procuring for him the laureatship. Of the same kind were his relations with the other eminent poets of his time, Hogg, Moore, etc. His life has been written by his son-in-law, **John Gibson Lockhart**, a novelist and a critic. Among biographies the work ranks next in fulness of detail, literary importance, and general interest, to Boswell's *Life of Johnson*.

10. — None of the writers of this period contributed more to the revolution in English poetry than **Lord Byron**. He was born in London, in 1788. His father was an unprincipled profligate, who deserted his wife, a Scottish heiress of ancient

and illustrious extraction. Almost destitute after her husband's death (1791), Mrs. Byron retired with her boy to her native city of Aberdeen. She was of a passionate and uncontrolled temper, and unable to form her son's character. She passed from paroxysms of rage to paroxysms of tenderness, at one time stifling him with her caresses, at another time insulting him on account of the deformity of one of his feet. In 1798 the boy's grand-uncle died without issue, and left him his baronial title and the noble residence of Newstead Abbey near Nottingham. He and his mother were now relieved from the pressure of poverty. In 1805 he went to Cambridge, and there became remarkable for his eccentric habits and his defiance of discipline. It was while at Cambridge, in 1807, that he wrote *Hours of Idleness*, a small volume of fugitive poems. This collection gave undoubted indications of poetic genius, but it met with a severe critique in the *Edinburgh Review* — understood to have been written by Lord Brougham. Byron was thrown into a frenzy of rage, and amply revenged himself in the celebrated satire of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, in which he lampooned almost all the literary men of the day, Walter Scott, Moore, and a thousand others. While his name was thus rising in renown, he left England

for a course of foreign travel, and visited countries then little frequented, almost unknown to English society, Greece, Turkey, and the East. After a stay of two years, he returned and gave to the world the two first cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812). This poem was received at once with the utmost enthusiasm. " I awoke ", says the author, " one morning and found myself famous ". Romantic tales quickly followed, the *Giaour* and the *Bride of Abydos* in 1813, the *Corsair* and *Lara* in 1814. They were written somewhat upon the plan which Scott's poems had rendered so fashionable. As Scott had drawn his materials from feudal and Scottish life, Byron broke up new ground in describing the manners, scenery, and wild passions of the East and of Greece. He soon became the poetical idol of the day, and indulged in all the pleasures of the gay circles of London. In 1815 he married Miss Milbanke, daughter of a baronet in the county of Durham. The union was unhappy, and was dissolved after the birth of a daughter. The world of England condemned the husband and absolved the wife. The reaction came, and Byron first worshipped with idolatry, was then persecuted with fury. He went again to the continent, with a determination not to return to his native country. The remainder of his life he

spent in Switzerland, Italy and Greece, seeking relief by misanthropic attacks on all that his countrymen held sacred. Among the poems written in this later period of his life are *Manfred,* a dramatic poem in three acts; *Beppo*, a Venetian story; *Cain, a Mystery,* in three acts, a thoughtful production representing the way in which the doctrines of original sin and final reprobation affected the author's own soul; the third and fourth cantos of *Childe Harold*; *Don Juan*, a poem in sixteen cantos, which has no further connection with the Don Juan of romance than the possession of a similar name, and is admitted to be Byron's greatest work. While soaring into the pure regions of taste and breathing noble sentiments, our poet led a wild life. At Venice he plunged into the grossest excesses, and associated with wretches who seemed almost to have lost the gait and physiognomy of man. He redeemed his faults by his death at Missolonghi in April, 1824. His biography was published in 1830 by his friend, Thomas Moore, under the title of *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron, with Notices of his Life.*

The position of Byron as a writer is a curious one. As a critic, his tastes and inclinations led him to take part with the school which was going out; he spoke of Pope with admiration and hinted that

he thought him a greater poet than Shakespeare and Milton. As a poet, he was with the school which was coming in; though always sneering at Wordsworth, he was the interpreter between him and the multitude. At all events, his popularity was unbounded. His poetry, however, has undergone for half a century a severe sifting; much of what was admired by his contemporaries has been rejected as worthless. But there still remains much that can only perish with the English language.

11. — In his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, Byron commemorated a duel between **Jeffrey**, the celebrated critic of the *Edinburgh Review*, and **Thomas Moore**. As in that duel no harm was done, a report got obroad that the duellists had fought with unloaded pistols. Moore sent a challenge to Byron, as he had done to Jeffrey. The challenge led, as with Jeffrey, to a sincere friendship between the two poets. Thomas Moore was born in 1779, nine years before Byron, in Dublin, of humble parentage; but through the wise affection of his parents, he received as good an education as his extraordinary display of boyish ability seemed to call for. He was a Roman Catholic, and Parliament having in 1793 opened the University of Dublin to Catholics, he was sent to

study there. In 1799 he passed over to London and commenced his career as a poet. He had little money in his purse, but was furnished with the manuscript of his translation of *Anacreon*. He was presented to the Prince Regent and permitted to dedicate his translation to him. At a subsequent period, he vas among the keenest satirists of the prince. For the moment, his work gave him the requisite start in London society, and his own wit and social tact accomplished the rest. In 1804 he obtained a post in the island of Bermuda, but speedily left his office to be performed by a deputy, and returned, after a tour in the United States, to England. Some of his prettiest lyrics, *e. g.*, the *Indian Bark* and the *Lake of the Dismal Swamp*, are memorials of the American journey. From the time of his return to that of his death he devoted himself to poetry and historical studies. He found his most abundant source of inspiration in the thought of his suffering country, his *green Erin, ... the emerald gem of the Western world.* His *Irish Melodies* and his *National Airs* obtained immense success. In these Irish patriotism found comfort and awakened sympathy even in the soul of Ireland's oppressors. As a specimen, let us give the following lines, entitled *After the Battle*: —

Night closed upon the conqueror's way,
And lightnings showed the distant hill,
Where they who lost that dreadful day
Stood few and faint, but fearless still.
The soldier's hope, the patriot's zeal,
For ever dimmed, for ever crossed;
Oh! who can tell what heroes feel.
When all but life and honour's lost!

The last sad hour of freedom's dream,
And valour's task, moved slowly by,
While mute they watched, till morning's beam
Should rise, and give them light to die!
There is a world where souls are free,
Where tyrants taint not nature's bliss;
If death that world's bright opening be,
Oh! who would live a slave in this?

Even in his masterpiece, *Lalla Rookh*, Moore tells us that he vainly strove to rise to the height of its original conception, until the thought struck him of embodying in his poem a sketch of the history of the Ghebers or fire-worshippers of Persia, a persecuted race who, like the Irish, had preserved the faith of their forefathers through centuries of oppression, and whose nationality had never been wholly crushed out by Moslem rule. This work appeared in 1817, and was hailed with a burst of admiration. Flushed with its success, Moore visited Paris, where he collected materials for his most humourous publication, *The Fudge*

Family in Paris (1818); it consits of a series of satirical poems, in the form of letters. Mr. Fudge is a creature of Lord Castlereagh and a kind of political spy. In 1819 Moore went to Italy, where he paid a visit to his friend Lord Byron at Venice. There he partly wrote his *Fables for the Holy Alliance*, designed, as well as *The Fudge Family*, to stem the tide of reaction which followed the great war. On his return from Italy, he took up his abode in Paris, where he resided till about the end of the year 1822. He had become involved in pecuniary difficulties by the conduct of the person who acted as his deputy at Bermuda. His friends made him many offers of assistance, but he looked mainly to his pen. In September 1822 he was informed that an arrangement had been made, and that he might with safety return to England. During his stay in Paris he had written *The Loves of the Angels*. He now turned his attention to prose. He compiled the *Life of Sheridan*, and the *Life and Letters of Lord Byron*. He also produced the *Epicurean*, a prose tale, a *History of Ireland*, the *Travels of a Gentleman in Search of a Religion*, etc. In 1848 he fell into a state of second childhood, and died in 1852. Moore has the merit of having won the heart and soul of the civilized world for his native country. It had long been

customary in England to look upon Ireland as a country to derive profit from, but to be disliked, and on the Irish as an entirely inferior race, though more than one highly gifted Irishman had crossed St. George's Channel. Thomas Moore was the first Catholic Irishman whose works became incorporated in the national literature of England, and the English are obliged to acknowledge that he is one of its most important representatives in modern times. To his countrymen he did much good, not only by contributing to their political and religious emancipation, but also by introducing a tone of good society and elegance instead of coarse and malignant invective. The songs he composed for them have redeemed from words vulgar and sometimes indecent, airs which they have consecrated to the memory of the glories and sufferings of Ireland.

12. — A still more intimate friend of Lord Byron than Thomas Moore, was **Percy Bysshe Shelley.** The lives of both present many points of similarity, as well in great natural advantages, poisoned and rendered nugatory by untoward circumstancies, as in unhappy domestic relations, and avowed hostility to society. Shelley was born in 1792. His father was a member of the House of Commons. In the public school where he was put

when ten years of age, and afterwards at Eton, he was harshly treated both by his instructors and his school-fellows. He resisted all established authority, and was fond of reading wild romances and tales of *diablerie.* He has portrayed his early impressions in the introduction to his *Revolt of Islam* : —

> ....
> ....
> And from that hour did I with earnest thought
> Heap knowledge from forbidden mines of lore;
> Yet nothing that my tyrants knew or taught
> I cared to learn..........................
> ....

He was the same when he went to Oxford, where he attacked Christianity, Religion, the very idea of God. The authorities expelled him from the University. His family were shocked, and could not tell what to make of such a youth; and, at the age of seventeen, he removed to London to live as his own master. There he printed the atheistical poem of *Queen Mab* (1810), containing many passages of imaginative beauty, but disfigured by a crudenesss, not to say an immorality of thought, of which he learned afterwards to be ashamed. His society, his sympathy, were given, by preference to the outcast and the wretched. When in his twentieth year, he induced the

daughter of a retired tradesman to elope with him, and married her in Edinburgh. After three years of married life, spent in different places, and for the last part of the time unhapilly, he separated from his wife, who afterwards terminated her existence in a melancholy manner by suicide, and contracted during her lifetime a second marriage with the daughter of William Godwin, the novelist who wrote *Caleb Williams*. In 1815 he composed *Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude*, a poem intented to sketch the sufferings of a genius like his own : he thirts for a friend who shall understand and sympathize with him, and blighted by disappointment sinks into an untimely grave. His first wife had given him two children. After her death there arose a public scandal. Shelley wished to have his children to live with him, but blazoned all over Britain as an atheist, he was declared incapable by law of exercising the duties of a father. Deeply wounded, he resolveld to leave England for ever. In the spring of 1818 he carried out the resolution by going to Italy. Before leaving England, he had written his *Revolt of Islam*, which has the same peculiarities of thought and style as *Alastor*. The four years following his arrival in Italy were the period of his finest production : *Prometheus Unbound*, a classic drama which is a hymn to the

liberating power of love over mankind; *The Cenci*, a tragedy which reminds the reader of the dramas of Otway, and is, in spite of its revolting plot, one of the finest of the author's productions; *Hellas*, a drama overflowing with enthusiastic love of liberty, and composed for the cause of Greece, by which Shelley was deepley touched, like Byron; *Adonais*, an elegy on the death of Keats; etc., etc. In Italy Shelley renewed his acquaintance with lord Byron. There his favourite amusement was boating and sailing. Whilst returning one day, the 8th of July 1822, from Leghorn, whither he had come to welcome, with Byron, their friend Leigh Hunt to Italy, the boat in which he sailed in company with a friend and a single boatman, went down in the Bay of Spezzia, and all perished. Shelley's body was cast up on the coast some days after, and burnt after the manner of the ancients, Byron and Hunt assisting at the ceremony. Our poet was more unhappy than he deserved to be. It was his misfortune to have assumed the name of Atheist, and employed it as a signature, shrieking it wherever he went, and seeming sometimes to riot in the very horror it produced. It may be doubted whether from any study of his poems the name would ever have been attached to him. He would have been called much more probably a Pantheist,

a Platonist, or the like. The brand of Atheist which he bore even prevented his philanthropy from being trusted or tolerated. The very poor shrank from him, and took his money suspiciously. As for his poetry, it is very peculiar, totally diffe-rent, for example, from the poetry of Wordsworth, or of Byron, or of any other preceding poet. It is an intellectual food for minds of sufficient culture, and only minds of considerable culture are likely ever to read much of it. Those shorter lyrical pieces, however, *The Sensitive Plant*, *The Cloud, the Ode to the Skylark*, etc., are known even to those who know nothing else of Skelley, and read again and again for their melody. The last stanza of the *Skylark* reminds us of the four famous lines quoted above from Denham's *Cooper's Hill* (1) :

Teach me half the gladness
  That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
  From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then, as I am listening now.

13. — Shelley died when but thirty years old, his poet-friend **John Keats** when only twenty-five. The father of the former was of a family of

(1) See chapter IX.

great aniiquity, tracing its descent from one of the followers of William of Normandy; the father of the latter was a livery-stable keeper in London. John was the third of five children, and was born in 1795. He early lost his parents, and was apprenticed to a surgeon-apothecary. During his apprenticeship he devoted part of his time to literature, and was passionately affected by the *Fairy Queen*. From Spenser he went to Chaucer, from Chaucer to Milton, from Milton to Shakespeare, and so on. It was pretty clear to himself and to his friends that he would not persevere in becoming a surgeon. He soon gave up attending hospitals, and found more agreeable employment in the society of Leigh Hunt, Shelley, Godwin, and others. In 1817 he published a little volume of poems, which showed his power to his friends. Like all the fresher young poets of his time, he had imbibed that theory of poetry which, for more than twenty years, Wordsworth had been disseminating by precept and by example through the literary mind of England. In 1818 appeared his *Endymion : A Poetic Romance,* founded in part on the model of Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess*. Il was severely censured by the *Quarterly Review*, an attack which has been described as the cause of the poet's *death*. The story is proved to have been wholly

untrue. Keats had sense enough and courage enough to get over that chagrin. Other causes were at work, the chief of which was consumption which he had inherited from his mother. In the winter of 1819-20 he was seized with a fatal blood-spitting. After a few months of lingering, he was removed to Italy; and there, having suffered much, he breathed his last at Rome in 1821. He had wished for ten years of poetic life: —

> O for ten years, that I may overwhelm
> Myself in Poesy! So I may do the deed
> That my own soul has to itself decreed!

But not half that term had been allowed him. The sole literary event of his life, after the publication of his *Endymion*, had been the publication of his *Lamia*, a story of Greek witchcraft; the *Eve of St. Agnes*, the subject and colouring of which are furnished by the legends and superstitions of the middle ages; and the *Pot of Basil*, a story versified from Boccaccio. All these three appeared with *Other Poems* in his latest volume, in 1820. Taken together, all the works of Keats do not amount to much more than a day's leisurely reading, and yet the most competent judges place him very near to the best English poets. He his certainly one of the most remarkable for his exquisite

mastery in language and verse. There is hardly any recent poet in connection with whom the mechanism of verse in relation to thought may be studied more delightfully.

14. — The names of **George Crabbe** (1754-1832) and of **Thomas Campbell** (1777-1844) deserve mention in this chapter, not precisely as having a great share in the literary revolution spoken of, but rather as being links between it and the age of Johnson. Their works, while retaining in their form much of the correctness of the past age and the characteristics of the school that was exploded, exhibit in their subjects and treatment that intensity of human interest and that selection of real passion which constitute the principles of the new school. Crabbe is a poet of reality, and of the reality of every day life. It would be vain to look for any ideality in his works. His descriptions produce a dismal and even terrible impression; but their stern truthfulness has helped to banish conventional Arcadian falsehood from English literature. His early publications date from the eighteenth century, the *Library*, the *Village*, the *Newspaper*. From 1807 to 1819 appeared the *Parish Register*, the *Hall of Justice*, *Sir Eustace Grey*, the *Borough*, the *Tales of the Hall*. — Thomas Campbell's first poem was

his *Pleasures of Hope* (1799); it was a continuation of the lines of thought marked out by Pope and other moralists; its style is that of the old school. Ten years later he published his *Gertrude of Wyoming,* a Pennsylvanian tale, which is a sufficient proof that he had fully imbibed the spirit of the modern school. Between the publication of these two poems appeared two warlike ones, *Hohenlinden* and the *Battle of te Baltic,* the popular sailor-song *Ye Mariners of England,* and other lyrics. Campbell, though born in Glasgow, was a Highlander both in blood and nature. His genius is most attractive in those poems in which his loving Celtic nature has free play. Such are *O'Connor's Child, Lochiel's Warning, The Exile of Erin,* and *Lord Ullin's Daughter.*

We here conclude this chapter; our aim in it has been to make known the principal poets by whom the literary revolution in poetry in modern times was worked out. This revolution arose from the theory of Wordsworth, according to which the age of true English poetry had been the period of Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Fletcher and Milton. The subsequent period, from Dryden to Wordsworth's own appearance as a poet, was regarded as a prosaic interregnum, during which what

passed for poetry was either an inflated style of diction, or, at best, shrewd sense and wit put into metre.

CHAPTER XIV

The Nineteenth Century

1. — Before retracing the history of the various kinds of writings which have marked the nineteenth century, it is necessary to say something of a few reviews which by sharp sound criticism have exercised great influence on the development of literature. The most important are the *Edinburgh Review*, the *Quarterly Review*, and *Blackwood's Magazine*.

The *Edinburgh Review* was established in 1802, by **Brougham, Sydney Smith** and **Francis Horner,** and was placed almost immediately under the editorship of **Francis Jeffrey** (1773-1850), who conducted it till 1829. Its criticisms were characterized by a singular boldness and pungency, and it soon became the organ of the Whig party. Jeffrey, besides editing the work and *infusing his* own spirit into the contributors, wrote

largely for it himself—the finest articles on poetry and on elegant literature being from his pen. His judgment was often warped by prejudice, but he never sacrificed to party the interests of morality or of religion. In 1844 he collected his more important contributions and published them in three volumes.

At first the *Edinburgh Review* received aid from Sir Walter Scott, who held Tory principles. But the increasing differences of political creed induced the novelist, though he was a Scotchman, to suggest, in 1809, the establishment of the *Quarterly Review* in London, designed to be, both in literature and politics, a counterpoise to the Scottish organ of the Whigs. The editorship of it was entrusted to **William Gifford** (1757-1826), previously known for his *Baviad* (1794) and *Maeviad* (1795). In his hands it became a powerful political and literary journal, to which leading statesmen of the Tory party and authors alike contributed. He continued to discharge his duties as editor until within two years of his death. His object was too often to crush such authors as were opposed to the Government of the day; his criticisms, in consequence, often want candour. He was succeeded, after a short interregnum, by Lockhart, Scott's son-in-law, under whose direction, from 1826 to

1853, the reputation of the *Quarterly* was not only maintained, but augmented. —*Blackwood's Magazine*, another organ of Torysm, was started in Scotland in 1817; Lockhart wrote for it as well as for the *Quarterly Review*, but its presiding spirit was **John Wilson** (1785-1854), under the name of Christopher North and other pseudonyms. The style of this writer, as a reviewer, was often coarse, prejudiced and brutal. He had first become known by his two poems of *The Isle of Palms,* published in 1812, and *The City of the Plague,* in 1816, both rich in passages of tender and dreamy beauty.—Many writers distinguished themselves by their contributions to the Reviews and Magazines. Several of them are called *essayists*. The prince of the essayists was Macaulay, who will presently be mentioned as an historian; here we shall only devote a few lines to three other essayists who stand forth preeminent, Charles Lamb, Thomas de Quincey, and William Hazlitt.

2. — **Charles Lamb** (1775-1834) began his literary career in 1797 as a poet. His earliest works in verse were prompted probably by the productions of his friends Coleridge and Wordsworth. Twice he essayed the drama, writing *John Woodvil,* a tragedy, and *Mr. H.,* a farce; the first was mercilessly ridiculed by the Edinburgh Re-

viewers, and the second rejected by the public. His fame he owes principally to his *Essays of Elia*, contributed at different times to the *London Magazine*, and afterwards reprinted in a collected form. They are the finest things, for humour, taste, penetration, and vivacity, which have appeared since the days of Montaigne. In conjunction with his sister Mary, he published the *Tales from Spakespeare.* By his *Specimens of the Old English Dramatists* he had the principal share in reviving the general study and love of the early drama. — **Thomas de Quincey** (1785-1859) is one of the most eminent prose writers of this century. He more than any other has carried the spirit and manner of poetry into prose. The best known of his writings is the *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, published originally in the *London Magazine.* He contributed to introduce German literature to English readers; some of the best translations of Richter and Lessing are from his pen. — **William Hazlitt** (1778-1830) wrote essays on the English novelists and other standard authors, first published in the *Edinburgh Review.* His *English Comic Writers*, his *Dramatic Literature of the Time of Elizabeth,* and his *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*, were chiefly composed of theatrical criticisms contributed to the journals of the

day. In these works he did manful service towards reviving the study of ancient English poetry, especially that of the Elizabethan age. His most elaborate and characteristic book is the *Life of Napoleon*, in four volumes (1828-30).

3. — Among the essays published during the period under our consideration, the best are those which **Macaulay** contributed to the *Edinburgh Review*. They would have been sufficient to preserve their author's memory, even if he had not written his *History of England*. This most popular of modern prose writers was born in 1800 at Rothley Temple, in Leicestershire. He was the son of Zachary Macaulay, a leader with Wilberforce amongst that distinguished band to whom England owes the abolition of the slave trade. His mother was a person of talent; from her he seems to have inherited his buoyant temperament. He was educated at Cambridge, where he acquired a great reputation. In 1825, he wrote for the *Edinburgh* an article on Milton which may be regarded as the starting-point of his literary career; it was the first of his brilliant series of *Essays*. In 1830 he entered Parliament, and obtained a leading position in the Reform debates of 1831 and 1832. He went strongly and unreservedly with the Whigs. He was subsequently appointed to a high legal

office in India. He returned furnished with materials for his two best essays, viz., those on *Lord Clive* and *Warren Hastings*. In 1843 he published a selection of *Critical and Historical Essays*, which he dedicated to Francis Jeffrey. The year before he had produced his *Lays of Ancient Rome,* which surprised and gratified the lovers of poetry and of classic story. All these works, with the ballads, *The Battle of Naseby, Ivry, The Armada,* are surpassed by the *History of England.* Macaulay had been labouring on it for many years when the first two volumes appeared in 1849. He purposed to write the history of his country "from the accession of King James the Second down to a time which is within the memory of men still living". He had not the time to finish the work. In 1855 he published two other volumes; it was all he could do himself. After his death appeared a portion of a fifth volume. All together give the history of about sixteen years, from the accession of James II. (1685) down to the death of William III. (1702). The success of the book was so extraordinary that eleven large editions of the first volume had been called for before the second appeared. While carrying on his *History*, Macaulay turned aside to write for the *Encyclopædia Britannica* some biographies — the Lives of Atterbury,

Bunyan, *Goldsmith*, *Johnson*, and *Pitt*. Meantime honours were coming in to crown his labours. The year 1857 was especially fruitful of rewards to successful toil. In that year he was elected a foreign member of the French Academy, and raised to the peerage as Baron Macaulay of Rothley —the first literary man to receive such a distinction. He did not long enjoy his honours. His multifarious labours began to tell upon him. He died at his residence, Holly Lodge, Kensington, on the 28th of December 1859. Macaulay is admirable for his great logical clearness and good sense, his skill in analysing characters and motives. But the marvel of his works is the style. He his perhaps the best prose writer of the nineteenth century. It may be safely said that he has not written a single sentence which is not as clear as it can be, that he has never clothed his meaning in words which can convey to the reader any other sense than that he desired they should bear. His sentences are never complicated; one may read a sentence twice to judge of its full force, never to comprehend its meaning.

4. — Besides Macaulay, there are in this period many historians whose works are worthy of a permanent place in English literature. **Thomas *Arnold*** (1795-1842), head-master of Rugby

School, is the author of a *History of Rome* to the end of the second Punic War (1838-42). He was a disciple of the German historian Niebuhr (1776-1831), who sought to eliminate from the political chronicles of Rome the true history of the origin of that state, and taught scholars to think and feel as the Romans felt and thought. — **Sir George Cornewall Lewis** (1806-1863) attacks the method adopted by Niebuhr in his *Inquiry into the Credibility of Early Roman History* (1855). — **Bishop Thirlwall** (1797-1875) published a valuable *History of Greece* (1835-41), written from an anti-democratic point of view. He has been eclipsed by **George Grote** (1794-1871) who in another *History of Greece* (1846-1856) sympathizes with the Athenian democracy.

The most illustrious recent writers upon history of the middle ages or modern times, are, after Macaulay — Hallam, Lingard, Palgrave, Sharon Turner, Freeman, Froude, Mackintosh, Alison, Napier, and Carlyle.—**Henry Hallam**'s (1777-1859) principal works are his *View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages* (1818), his *Constitutional History from the Accession of Henry VII. to the Death of George II.* (1827), and his *Introduction to the Literature of Europe* in the 15th,

16th, and 17th Centuries (1737). These works are of great value, though antiquated in some parts; the style lacks animation and freshness.—**Dr Lingard** (1781-1859) is the Roman Catholic historian of England. He published in 1819 three volumes of *A History of England,* and afterwards added five more, bringing down the narrative to the abdication of James II. Though his talents are of a high order, and he displays great diligence and candour in collecting and investigating original materials, the Protestant historians of literature find that impartiality forsakes him when he treats of the English Reformation and Reformers. His work was formerly introduced as a text-book into the higher schools of France. — **Sir Francis Palgrave** (1788-1861) directed his labours to the elucidation of early English history. His principal works are a *History of the Anglo-Saxons* (1831), a *History of the English Commonwealth* (1832) (meaning the English community, not the Commonwealth of the 17th century), and the *History of Normandy and of England* (1851-57). — **Sharon Turner** (1768-1847) wrote the *History of the Anglo-Saxons* (1799-1805), upon which his reputation chiefly rests. He continued the history of England down to the death of Elizabeth. — ***Freeman's*** (born 1823) *History of the Norman*

Conquest (1866-76) may be ranked among the great works of the present century. — **James Anthony Froude** (b. 1818) has for a large portion of the sixteenth century rivalled the research and statistical knowledge of Lord Macaulay for the seventeenth century; his *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Death of Elizabeth* (1856-70) is a work of sterling merit. From 1871 to 1874 he published *The English in Ireland in the Eigtheenth Century*, a book much disliked by the Irish, being a vindication, or at least a palliation, of the conduct of the English Government towards Ireland. — **Sir James Mackintosh** (1765-1832) was first brought into notice by his *Vindiciae Gallicae*, a defence of the French Revovolution, published in 1791, in reply to Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790). In 1803, he distinguished himself by a brilliant defence of Peltier, a French Royalist prosecuted for a libel on Bonaparte, then First Consul. The great literary ambition of his life was to write a compendious and popular *History of England;* he had collected many materials, but he left only two fragments, the one of his *History of England*, the other of his *History of the Revolution of 1688*. The latter has been favourably noticed in an essay of Lord Macaulay : "We find in it the

diligence, the accuracy, and the judgment of Hallam, united to the vivacity and colouring of Southey. A history of England, written throughout in this manner, would be the most fascinating book in the language. It would be more in request at the circulating libraries than the last novel". The success of Macaulay's own history verified the prediction. — In the art of engaging the reader's attention, and sustaining it by the vigour, spirit, and vivacity of the narrative, many great historians must cede superiority to **Sir Archibald Alison** (1792-1867). He was at Paris in 1814 wen Talma, our great tragic actor, played before the Allied Sovereigns, and there conceived the idea of recording from its beginning the stirring series of events that was supposed to have terminated in their meeting. The prosecution of this idea cost him about thirty years of travel and compo sition; the first instalment of his *History of Europe from 1789 to the Restoration of the Bourbons in 1815* made its appearance in 1833, and the concluding volumes in 1844. Later on Alison wrote a continuation of this work—*The History of Europe from the Fall of Napoleon in 1815 to the Accession of Louis Napoleon in 1852* — a hasty compilation full of blunders and inconsistencies. — A *work of* great value is **Colonel Napier's** (1785-

1860) *History of the War in the Peninsula, and in the South of France, from the year 1807 to the year 1814* (1828-40). Southey had previously written a *History of the Peninsular War*, but it was heavy and uninteresting. Colonel Napier was an actor in the struggle he records, and has spoken of the English and the French armies with the knowledge and the enthusiasm of a soldier. The differences, and the peculiar excellences of each, are pointed out with a sagacity and precision that long experience and acurate knowledge could alone supply, and with that fairness and candour which always belongs to a generous and exalted spirit. — This impartiality is not the predominant characteristic of **Carlyle**'s (1795-1881) historical works. His *History of the French Revolution* (1837) is worthy of a man who in his old days (1870) was not ashamed publicly to rejoice over our defeat, quoting history to show that it had been well deserved. He published from 1858 to 1865 the *History of Frederick II., commonty called the Great*. He was a lover of Germany and did much to make her literature known in England. He wrote a *Life of Schiller*, and translated Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*. His *Sartor Resartus, being the Life and Opinions of Herr Teufelsdroeckh* (devil's dung), professes to be a review of

a supposed German work on dress, but in reality illustrates the transcendental philosophy of Fichte. His predilection for German thought and language, joined to his Northern origin, made him adopt a peculiar style, which is entirely his own — at first repulsive, but when familiar to the reader, highly exciting. In graphic power of description, whether of scenes or of characters, he had not a living equal. "With the gift of song", says a critic, "Carlyle would have been the greatest of epic poets since Homer".

5. — Nothing is more remarkable in the literary history of the nineteenth century, than the unexampled development of the department of prose fiction. In this branch women have written much, and in not a few cases with great success. **Mrs. Radcliffe** (1764-1823) was one of the earliest female novelists. Her most popular performances are the *Romance of the Forest,* the *Mysteries of Udolpho*, and *The Italian*. Dark mountains, fierce storms, wild banditti, ruined castles, strong passions of love and hate, the terrible, in a word, are the materials of her stories. Her style of composition powerfully affects the mind of the reader, but it is entirely without moral interest.—Against that romantic and extravagant nonsense there came *a sort of protest* from **Jane Austen** (1775-1817),

who depends for her effects upon no surprising adventures, nothing sensational. Her tales are those of common life, and generally represent the higher middle-class society of her time. *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park*, *Northanger Abbey*, etc., prove this gifted woman to have been the perfect mistress of her art, and enjoy, even in our day, a constantly increasing popularity. Their style, however, is not perfect modern English. — **Miss Edgeworth**'s (1767-1849) stories are hardly less admirable than those of Jane Austen. Most of them are distinguished for fine sketches of Irish life and manners. Under the general heading of *Early Lessons,* the authoress published a series of educational tales, among which *Frank*, *Harry and Lucy,* *Rosamond,* are the most charming. *The Parent's Assistant* is another work of a similar kind; this series was completed by three collections respectively called *Moral Tales*, *Popular Tales*, and *Fashionable Tales*. These writings are rather for the young, but they are also delightful to the adult reader. Sir Walter Scott, with whom Miss Edgeworth lived in the closest friendship, acknowledged that her Irish portraits greatly impressed his mind, and led him to do for the character of his countrymen what she had attempted so successfully for the character of her own.

6.—Mrs. Radcliffe, Miss Austen and Miss Edgeworth form, chronologically speaking, a link between the novelists of the eighteenth century and those of the Victorian Age. In this period our next group is still one of female novelists, among whom **Charlotte Brontë** (1816-1855) is the most remarkable. She was the eldest of three sisters whose *noms de plume,* 'Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell', have become familiar as household words in every English mouth. Under these three pseudonyms was published in 1846 a volume of poems, which met with little success. In the following year Charlotte produced a story, to which she gave the title of *Jane Eyre, an Autobiography,* much of the book being derived from her own experience. Its success was instant and remarkable. The authorship was kept a secret. Charlotte published another tale, *Shirley,* in 1849, and with this ended the mystery of the authorship. In 1853 appeared *Villette,* the subject of which had been suggested by Charlotte's experiences at a *pensionnat* in Brussels. This was the last of her works. The strange life of Charlotte Brontë and her two sisters has been narrated, with all the interest of romance, by **Mrs. Gaskell** (1811-1865), herself a novelist, whose *Mary Barton* is a faithful and painfully interesting picture of Manchester life.

7. — Two celebrated novelists, the **Earl of Beaconsfield (Benjamin Disraeli)** and **Lord Lytton** have combined literary pursuits with active political life. The former was the son of Isaac Disraeli, author of a well-known book, *Curiosities of Literature.* As a talented maintainer of Tory views, he made the novel the medium for discussing party politics. He was born in 1804, and as early as 1826 appeared as an author, puplishing *Vivian Grey,* a novel in two volumes. The work was read with great avidity, and became the book of the season and the talk of the town. The same was the case with *Coningsby, or the New Generation* (1844), and *Sibyl, or the Two Nations* (1845). Contemporaries were freely introduced, and sarcastic views of society set forth in a pointed and epigrammatic style. Though Disraeli's literary career was interrupted by a protracted and ardent devotion to politics, he produced more than a dozen novels; the last was *Endymion,* which appeared in 1880. Lord Beaconsfield died in 1881, having been twice prime minister of England. — Lord Lytton, often called **Bulwer-Lytton,** was born in 1805. His genius bloomed early. He made his first decided hit in *Pelham* (1827), which, though describing a past generation, soon became the fashionable novel. From this day to his death

(1873), Bulwer-Lytton toiled incessantly to win himself an honourable name in literature. In *Paul Clifford* and *Eugene Aram* he idealized the history of notorious criminals. In *The Last Days of Pompeii*, and in *Rienzi, the Last of the Tribunes*, he became a successor of Walter Scott, illustrating history by the sketch of the destruction of an ill-fated city, and that of the stirring events of the later history of mediaeval Rome; these two novels are likely to keep the public favour longest. *The Last of the Barons* is another historical romance, describing the times of Warwick, the King-Maker. Then comes the series of the *Caxton Novels*, the best of all Lytton's works. Our author was a clever dramatist; he wrote many plays, and three of them, *Richelieu*, *The Lady of Lyons*, and *Money*, still hold the stage. He published poems, of which one, *King Arthur*, is an epic, and *The New Timon*, partly a narrative and partly a satirical composition. His brilliant fame as a novelist and as a dramatic writer, has tended much to eclipse his performances as a poet.

8.—One of the most popular of English novelists is **Charles Dickens** (1812-1870), who, it may be said, came to fill up the void which Scott had left. There are few, in every civilized country, and *especially in* France, to whom this writer is not

fully known. We may, therefore, content ourself with giving a short sketch of his life and works. He was born in that middle rank of English life, within and below which his sympathies and powers as a novelist were confined. His first efforts in literature were some contributions to the *Monthly Magazine,* which, when published in a collected form as *Sketches by Boz,* attracted some notice (1836). His reputation was greatly increased by the appearance in the same year of the illustrated *Pickwick Papers*, of which Mr. Pickwicck is the hero, round him being assembled a company of original characters, all depicted with broad kindly humour. These were followed by *Oliver Twist* (1838), and *Nicholas Nickleby* (1839), in both of which Dickens pleads for the poor and neglected against the rich and privileged. In 1842 he visited America, and in the course of the following year entered upon a new tale, *Martin Chuzzlewit,* a bitter satire on Yankeeism, which deeply wounded the national feeling of Transatlantic society. About Christmas of the same year he threw off a light production in his happiest manner, *A Christmas Carol, in Prose,* which was dramatized at the London theatres. *The Chimes* greeted the Christmas of 1844, and *The Cricket on the Hearth* that of 1845. In 1846, when *The Daily News*, a Liberal

newspaper, was established, Dickens edited it for a short time. In 1849 appeared *David Copperfield*, usually regarded as marking the culmination of his genius. Into this story, which he liked the best of all, he introduced much of his life and experience, his father sitting for the character of Micawber. In 1850 he began the periodical *Household Words*, to which he contributed a *Child's History of England*. As a novelist one cannot but admire Charles Dickens, but as an historian he deserves little esteem. Historical truth is very different from novel fiction, and yet the author treats the one with the same freedom as he does the other. For instance, instead of admiring Thomas à Becket for altering the manner of his life, turning off all his brilliant followers, eating coarse food, drinking bitter water, wearing sackcloth, flogging his back to punish himself for his former pride and pomp, living in a little cell, and washing the feet of the poor, he affirms that the famous Archbishop did all this only that he might be talked about and be the better able to overawe the King. When fame and fortune were assured to our author, longer intervals began to separate the publications of his works. In addition to those already mentioned it may suffice to name here *Master Humphrey's Clock*, *Dombey and Son*, *Bleak*

House, Hard Times, Great Expectations, and *Our Mutual Friend.* Dickens revived the novel of genuine practical life, as it existed in the works of Fielding, Smollet, and Goldsmith; but at the same time gave to his materials an individual colouring and expression peculiarly his own. Tested by the principle that all the parts of a work of art must have a mutual relation, some of his creations may be held imperfect, — written for periodical issue, occasionally hurried, and wanting in proportion. He failed completely in the construction of a plot, and often drew figures which we should call *chargés.* But on the whole the tone of his writings is manly and sound, and their general view of life is cheerful and inspiriting; they exposed to public censure many abuses, thereby causing them to be reformed. All classes of England, from the sovereign downwards, were proud of the illustrious novelist, ond his sudden death on the 9th of June 1870 was lamented as a public calamity. He was interred in Westminster Abbey.

9. — While those who could see between the lines in *David Copperfield* were aware that they had before them an autobiography, those who knew how to read Dickens's famous contemporary in English prose fiction could trace him in his novels through every stage in his course. **William Makepiece**

Thackeray (1811-1864) was born at Calcutta, his father being in the Civil Service of the East India Company. When his mother was widowed in 1816, he left India, and, consigned to the care of English relatives and schoolmasters, arrived in England in 1817. He studied at home and on the Continent as an artist, when the loss of his fortune forced him to turn to literature as a profession. He became first known through *Fraser's Magazine*, to which he contributed articles under the names of *Titmarsh*, *Fitz-Boodle*, etc. In 1840 he published the *Paris Sketch Book*, illustrated by his pencil. When in the following year, *Punch*, the English Charivari, first saw the light, it opened up a new field for Thackeray's papers and pencil. In 1847 appeared in monthly parts his *Vanity Fair, a Novel without a Hero*, illustrated by himself. From that time Titmarsh disappeared, and the author took his place in his own proper name and person. "There are scenes of all sorts", says the author in his preface to the work : "some dreadful combats, some grand and lofty horse-riding, some scenes of high life and some of very middling indeed, some love-making for the sentimental, and some light comic business". This satirical novel is considered as the most remarkable of Thackeray's works for dramatic situation and for powerful analysis of

character. In the *History of Pendennis* (1849-50) and *The Newcomes* (1855) he satirizes the hypocrisy and false respectability of modern society; never was the absurd desire for display better exposed. In all three Thackeray appeared as a decided pessimist. But that his sense of the folly and wickedness of mankind did not destroy his love of the race is proved by the figure of Esmond in his *History of Henry Esmond* (1852), written in the form of an autobiography. The work is a sketch of the wits and men of action of Queen Anne's time. *The Virginians* (1857) is a tale of the time of Washington and the American War. The portion of history embraced in these two latter works had strong attractions for Thackeray; twice he delivered lectures in England and in the United States on the *English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century*, and on the *Four Georges*. He was not only an artist and a novelist, but also a poet. His verse differs little from his prose: the colour and flavour are the same. As a specimen, read his *Ballad of Bouillabaisse*: —

A street there is in Paris famous,
  For which no rhyme our langage yields,
Rue Neuve-des-Petits-Champs its name is —
  The New Street of the Little Fields;

An here's an inn, not rich and splendid,
  But still in comfortable case;
The which in youth I oft attended,
  To eat a bowl of Bouillabaisse.

This Bouillabaisse a noble dish is —
  A sort of soup, or broth, or brew,
Or hotchpotch of all sorts of fishes,
  That Greenwich never could outdo;
Green herbs, red peppers, mussels, saffern,
  Soles, onions, garlic, roach and dace;
All these you eat at Terré's tavern,
  In that one dish of Bouillabaisse.

Indeed, a rich and savoury stew 'tis;
  And true philosophers, methinks,
Who love all sorts of natural beauties,
  Should love good victuals and good drinks.
And Cordelier or Benedictine
  Might gladly, sure, his lot embrace,
Nor find a fast-day too afflicting,
  Which served him up a Bouillabaisse.

....
....

10. — As we can not attempt to name all the English novel writers who have made their appearance during the last thirty years, we shall content ourself with mentioning the following. **Charles Kingsley** (1819-1875), Canon of Westminster, was a novelist, poet, and miscellaneous writer. His poetry, like that of Lord Lytton, is rather a graceful foil to his other works than the basis

of his reputation. His stories, *Alton Locke*, *Yeast*, *Westward Ho*, *Hypatia*, *At Last*, etc., remind us of Thackeray by the insight into the mysteries of life, and of Dickens by the fine poetic fibre and susceptibility to pathos. The style is forcible, but uneven. Being a Protestant theologian, Kingsley may be excused when asserting in *Westward Ho* that the Protestantism of the Elizabethan age was all-important to the cause of freedom as well as true religion; but he gives no quarter to its opponents, and has marred the effect of part of his narrative by bitter assaults on the Romish Church. — **Anthony Trollope** (1815-1882) was the son of Mrs. **Frances Trollope** (1778-1863), a voluminous, witty, but inartistic novelist. Like his mother, he wrote a long list of novels; but these are remarkable for artistic finish, fidelity to nature, and general excellence. The best are *Doctor Thorne*, *Barchester Towers*, *The Bertrams*, *Framley Parsonage*, *The Last Chronicles of Barset*, etc. Trollope is a master in middle-class domestic fiction.—**George Eliot** (1820-1880) is the *nom de plume* adopted by Mrs. George Henry Lewes, *née* Marian Evans, who unquestionably occupies in the department of fiction the place nearest to those of Dickens and Thackeray. Into all her novels she instils her own faith in plain living

and high thinking, by showing that it is well in life to care greatly for something worthy of our care; choose worthy work, believe in it with all our souls, and labour to live through inevitable checks and hindrances, true to our best sense of the highest life we can attain. Her original powers were first tried in *Scenes of Clerical Life*. In this, as well as in the following novels, *Adam Bede*, *The Mill on the Floss*, *Silas Marner*, and *Felix Holt*, she painted the experiences of her youth, and English country life. Her *Romola*, an historical novel of Italian life in the days of Savonarola, was not so popular as scenes of English life. Her later works, *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda*, are a little injured by reflective and scientific affectation. She wrote in verse *The Spanish-Gipsy*, *The Legend of Jubal*, etc.; but her poems do not, with one or two exceptions, take a high rank. — **Thomas Hughes** (born 1823) is the author of *Tom Brown's School Days*, an excellent account of Rugby School under Dr Arnold. The hero, Tom Brown, is a genial, good-humoured and high-spirited schoolboy struggling towards manliness and Christian earnestness. *Tom Brown at Oxford* is the continuation of this work. — **William Wilkie Collins** (born 1824) commenced his career as an author with the biography of his father, the cele-

brated painter William Collins. He then turned to fiction, and became a master in the construction of plots. Delighting in dark deed, mysterious crime, perversity, and wickedness, he wrote a whole series of sensational novels. The *Woman in White* is his most famous story; it was preceded by *Hide and Seek*, *After Dark*, *The Dead Secret*, and followed by *Armadale*, *Man and Wife*, *The Moonstone*, etc. — There remains a multitude of novelists whose works are more or less faithful photographs of the humours and manners, the pleasures and speculations of the day; but our limits do not allow us to give them even the smallest notice.

11. — In the preceding chapter we have given the names of the principal poets of the first generation of the present century. We have now to deal with the poetry of the Victorian age. The foremost and most original poets are Tennyson and Browning, both still living. **Alfred Tennyson** (born 1809) published his first volume of poems in 1830, but had no great success. Three years after he issued a new volume, which was received as coldly, though it contained some poems that have since been highly applauded. He was now silent for nine years. In 1842 two volumes appeared, containing reprints of some of the former

took place at Rome in 1698. Browning's style is not graceful and delicate like that of Tennyson; it is rugged, brusque, quaint, and sometimes eccentric. — Browning's wife, **Mrs. Elizabeth Barrett Browning** (1809-1861), is one of the to most illustrious of English poetesses. Before she was married to Robert Browning (1846) she had given evidence of severe taste and vigour of intellect in her *Essay on Mind*, in *Prometheus Bound*, translated from Aeschylus, in her *Drama of Exile*, a kind of sequel to Paradise Lost, and her *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, etc. After her marriage she accompanied her husband to Pisa, whence they removed to Florence. There she wrote *Aurora Leigh*, exhibiting so strange a mixture of materials, of prose and poetry, that its effect as a whole is unsatisfactory. Taking a vehement interest in Italian politics, she wrote *Casa Guidi Windows*, an impassioned expression of her feelings. Her last publication was the *Poems before Congress* (1860), written under the pressure of the events they indicate. The *Congress* referred to is that of Villafranca after the war in Italy; Mrs. Browning startled even her admirers by her eulogium of the French Emperor. She died in 1861 at the Casa Guidi, Florence; and in front of the house, a *marble tablet* records that in it wrote and died

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, who, by her song, created a golden link between Italy and England, and that in gratitude Florence had erected that memorial. — Next to Tennyson and the Brownings ranks **Algernon Charles Swinburne** (born 1837), author of *Atalanta in Calydon, Song of Italy, Chastelard, Mary Stuart, Bothwell, Tristram,* etc. *Tristram* is the finest of his long poems, and *A Child's Song in Winter* one of the best of the minor ones. His verse shows wonderful melody and perfect mastery of metre. — There are several other poets in our time who have so far been more productive than creative; their works certainly claim attention both on account of their matter and their style; but as it is not certain that they will take a permanent place in English literature, we leave them out and pass on to a few prose writers in various departments.

12. — Three philosophical writers deserve mention before all others: Hamilton, John Stuart Mill, and Herbert Spencer. **Sir William Hamilton** (1788-1856) obtained in 1836 the chair of logic and metaphysics at the University of Edinburgh, which he filled with such lustre as to have regained for Scotland its former distinction in the field of metaphysics. His writings must be regarded as the most original and solid contributions to the Mental

Science of the century. These are especially his *Discussions in Philosophy* (1852), consisting of essays chiefly reprinted from the Edinburgh Review, and his *Lectures on Metaphysics*, published after his death. A very formidable assault on Hamilton's system was made by **John Stuart Mill** (1806-1873) in his *Examination of sir William Hamilton's Philosophy* (1865). When a youth of twenty years old, this writer was taking a leading part in the meetings of a small company at his father's house for the study of formal logic, and at those of the Utilitarian Society. His first great work, the *System of logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive* (1843), attempts to bring the method of Bacon into closer accordance with modern science. His method has been applied to ethical inquiry in his *Utilitarianism* (1863). This work had been preceded by the *Principles of Political Economy* (1848), and was followed by *The Subjection of Women* (1869), in which the author announced his belief in the intellectual and political equality of the sexes, and asserted the rights of women to equality in all respects with men. Mill died at Avignon in 1873, and was interred beside his wife, who had died there in 1858. — **Herbert Spencer** (born 1820) turns his activity as a philosophical writer to social, *political, and* speculative questions; he aims at a

complete system of Mental Science. His first work of general interest was *The Proper Sphere of Government* (1842). From 1848 to 1852 he wrote for the *Economist*, and in 1854 published *Social Statics, or Conditions Essential to Human Happiness*. Among his other works the best known are his *Principles of Psychology*, his *Education, Intellectual Moral and Physical*, his *Study of Sociology*, etc. They evince lucid exposition and beautiful generalizations from scientific facts; the fundamental reason of every act or thought is sought after. Take, for instance, that of the immorality of gambling (from *Study of Sociology*) : —

The normal obtainment of gratification, or of the money which purchases gratification, implies firstly that there has been put forth equivalent effort of a kind which in some way furthers the general good; and implies, secondly, that those from whom the money is received, get directly, or indirectly, equivalent satisfaction. But in gambling, the opposite happens. Benefit received does not imply effort put forth; and the happiness of the winner involves the misery of the loser.

The philosophical historian **William Lecky** (born 1838) deserves mention here. He his the author of the *History of Rationalism in Europe* (1865) and the *History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne* (1869). His *History of*

England in the Eighteenth Century (1878-82) is written in a singulary pleasing and lucid style.

13. — A few lines must be given to two writers still living whose works will certainly survive; the one is an art critic, the other a philologist. **John Ruskin** (born 1819) has devoted himself for many years, in various cities of Europe, to the study of painting and architecture, and communicated to the public from time to time the results of his investigations in a series of well-known volumes and *brochures*. His *Modern Painters, The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, and *The Stones of Venice* are his principal works. His style is original, masterly, and of rare beauty. Its chief defect is a vein of petulance and intolerance, which is strongest in his later books. He has the merit of writing like a consecrated priest of the Abstract and Ideal in a time when utilitarianism is about to invade the largest part of the field of literature. — **Max Müller**, a German long resident in England, has done more than any other to draw general attention to the value and the beauty of the Science of Language. He owes much to Burnouf's lectures, which he attended in 1845 at the Collège de France. In 1846 he proceeded to England in order to carry out a great work, the *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, or Sacred *Hymns of* the Brahmans. He took up his abode at

Oxford, where he became Professor of Modern Languages. His *Rig-Veda* was published in six volumes, from 1849 to 1874, at the expense of the East India Company. While engaged in the composition of that masterly work, he issued *A history of the Ancient Sanskrit Literature* (1859), *Lectures on the Science of Language, Chips from a German Workshop* (1868-70), etc. Though he had received from the French Academy the prize of Volney, and had been made one of the eight foreign members of the Institute of France, he wrote in 1871 to the *Times* his *Letters on the War* against our country, and in doing this, evinced a soul fuller of meanness than Carlyle's was.

Here we bring our brief history of the English language and literature in the British Islands to an end. We think it fit to add a chapter on Anglo-American literature. If political or commercial rivalry may arise from time to time between *John Bull* and his cousin *Brother Jonathan*, it must be owned that the language of both, being the same, is a tie which binds them to each other, and maintains a close resemblanee in their several ways of thinking and feeling.

CHAPTER XV

Anglo-American Literature

1. — The growth of Anglo-American literature is not entirely confined to the present century. In the time of the War of Independence (1765-1783), political activity became closely allied to political eloquence. **Benjamin Franklin** (1706-1790) must have been a fine, clever speaker, as well as many of his comtemporaries; his speeches, however, not having been preserved, have little share in his literary renown. He is rather known for his *Poor Richard's Almanack*, which he began to publish in 1732, and continued for twenty-five years. His other works are *Essays* on general politics, commerce, political economy, religious and moral subjects, etc.; *Letters and Papers* on electricity, philosophical subjects, etc.; an *Autobiography, Correspondence, Political Papers* during and after the American Revolution. No collector of American history can do without the set of Franklin's writings. Their peculiar charm consists in clearness; the uninitiated can understand them as well as the *philosophers,* and they are far from being devoid of

ornament and amusement.—**Thomas Jefferson** (1743-1826) is the author of the *Declaration of Independence* (1776), a brief, decisive act, the concentrated will and resolution of a whole family of States. As an author he is best known by his *Notes on the State of Virginia.* — At that time the two famous national songs were composed: *Yankee Doodle*, a somewhat comic tune, and **Joseph Hopkinson's** *Hail, Columbia!* which has become the American national hymn. Down to the nineteenth century, American poetry produced nothing that could claim to be original; it was only a faint echo of the contemporary English.

2. — In the nineteenth century three American poets enjoy universal admiration : Bryant, Poe, and Longfellow, — **William Cullen Bryant** (1794-1878) showed very early a propensity to versifying, and by the publication of his longest poem, *The Ages*, in 1821, his reputation as a poet was established; it is a survey of the experience of mankind. *Thanatopsis* was written when the poet was only between eighteen and nineteen years old, and published five years before the *Ages*; it may be praised as a remarkable production for a youth, and quoted as a noble example of true poetical enthusiasm. Bryant has been called the father of the present generation of American poets. His

verses have been compared with those of Wordsworth; the parallel may be justified by their sweet solemnity and their *English undefiled.* Bryant commenced in 1876, and completed in four volumes, with **Sydney Howard Gay,** *A Popular History of the United States*, a splendid work, finely illustrated, and written in a pleasing style. — **Edgar Allan Poe** (1809-1849) was the son of strolling players; he was only two years old when his parents died. A rich merchant, named Allan, adopted and liberally educated him. The boy gave way early to habits of dissipation and to gambling. After various scenes of wretchedness, he became a contributor to several American periodicals, and published morbid and gloomy prose tales. His name, however, attained the world-wide popularity it has enjoyed for more than forty years, by the poem of *The Raven* (1845), which was hailed as the most striking that America had ever produced. Though coloured by a diseased imagination, it contains bright gleams of fancy, and is written with remarkable ease and gracefulness. Poe died as he had lived: he was at Baltimore when he fell down drunk and delirious in the streets, was carried to a hospital, and there ended his deplorable life. — **Henry Wadsworth Longfellow** (1807-1882) was born in Portland, Maine. As a young

man, he received the appointment of Professor of Modern Languages at Bowdoin College, Maine, where he had studied and graduated. For the purpose of enlarging his opportunities of studious application, he went abroad, and spent three years, from 1826 to 1829, in France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Holland, and England. In 1835, by the resignation of George Ticknor, the author of the *History of Spanish Literature*, a vacancy occurred in Harvard University, Cambridge (near Boston), and Longfellow was elected Professor of Modern Languages and Literature in that University. Permission was granted to him for a second tour of Europe in 1835, and a third visit in 1842. His travels not only enabled him to become a proficient in languages with which he was already familiar from their literature, and to produce his prose volumes of reminiscences entitled *Outre-Mer* (1835) and *Hyperion* (1839), but afforded him that wider knowledge of men and manners, by which alone, at least in the present complex state of society, a writer can estimate correctly the impulses common to the human heart in all civilized parts of the world. His earlier poems are the *Voices of the Night*, the *Poems on Slavery*, *The Spanish Student*, a work which betrays little dramatic capacity, *The Belfry of Bruges*. *Evangeline* fol-

lowed in 1849, and gained a fixed reputatiou, partly by the grace of the story — the dispossession of the French inhabitants of Nova Scotia by the British in 1755 — and partly by the double effort to naturalize the hexameter in Saxon verse and to nationalize American literature. *The Golden Legend*, a picture of monkish life in the middle ages, *The Song of Hiawatha*, devoted to a description of life among the aboriginal tribes of America, were attempts for which it may be questioned whether the genius of the author was sufficiently strong. *Miles Standish*, the *New England Tragedies*, the *Three Books of Songs*, and a translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, are among Longfellow's later productions. As a whole, his themes are serene, sober, almost patriarchal; and his images, if they lack somewhat of the true Promethean fire, rarely fail to raise some noble emotions. His smaller pieces are in general superior to his larger ones. Some have become so popular as to serve for painting or engraving. Who has not seen the picture *Excelsior*?

The shades of night were falling fast,
As through an Alpine village passed
A youth who bore, 'mid snow and ice,
A banner with the strange device,
Excelsior!

....

James Russell Lowell (born 1819), Longfellow's successor in Harvard College, is a poet of great merit. He appeared as an author in 1841, when he published a volume of poems entitled *A Year's Life*. He struck the true vein of his genius in the *Biglow Papers* (1849, and produced his most popular work, *Under the Willows, and other Poems,* in 1869.

3. — Anglo-American fiction has been very fertile since the beginning of the nineteenth century. The first distinguished representative of that department of literature is **Washington Irving** (1783-1859). He began to write at a time when America had little literature of her own. His narratives are rather intended to offer a poetical description of real life and history than the bold creations of pure fiction. His first publications were contributions to a semi-monthly magazine, the famous *Salmagundi*, which appeared in 1807, and seemed as if it ought to have, for its amusing character, a long and profitable life, but was discontinued after the issue of the twentieth number. In 1809 he produced under the *nom de plume* of "Diedrich Knickerbocker" the *History of New York,* a facetious history of his native town, the most elaborate piece of humour in American literature. Some consider his *Sketch Book* (1819) as a novel;

they are only partly right. The stories of *Rip van Winkle* and of *Sleepy Hollow* are, it is true, pieces of fictitious writing; but the portraitures of English life and customs have rather an historical character, though not strictly accurate. The same style of fanciful English delineation is continued in *Bracebridge Hall* (1822). The *Tales of a Traveller* (1824) are another series of tales and sketches. The *Sketch Book* and *Bracebridge Hall* made Irving a favourite with the whole civilized world. Having gone to Spain as ambassador, this residence suggested to him two works, both partly fictitious, *The Conquest of Granada* (1829), and *The Alhambra* (1832), together with the more important *Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* (1828). His last book, *The Life of Georges Washington*, was completed not long before his death. All his writings evince fine taste and graces of composition; if a young aspirant after literary distinction wishes to study a style which possesses the characteristic beauties of Addison's, its ease, simplicity, and elegance, with greater accuracy, point, and spirit, let him give his days and nights to the volumes of Irving. He is an English writer in the true sense of the word; he contributed, more than any other, to remove the coldness and distrust which had separated Englishmen and

Americans. The candour with which the English have recognized his literary merits is honourable to both countries, and, among individuals, especially to Walter Scott, under whose cordial and kind auspices Irving began his literary career in Europe.

4. — Great celebrity in England and over all Europe has also been obtained by **James Fenimore Cooper** (1789-1851). His passion for sea-life and love of adventure made him a master in pictures of the sea, and wild Indian scenery and manners. His maiden novel, entitled *Precaution* (1819), was one of the English *fashionable society* school, and attracted little attention. He next published *The Spy* (1821), founded upon incidents connected with the American Revolution. This tale was highly successful, not only in America, but also in many parts of Europe. The reputation of the author was confirmed abroad as well as at home by the appearance of *The Pioneers* and *The Pilot* (1823), and *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826). Before the end of 1826 he sailed for Europe, where he remained for several years. During this time he wrote *The Prairie*, *The Red Rover*, *The Bravo*, etc., and established a reputation which, with the robust qualities of his personal character, made him a welcome visitor in European circles.

His principal productions after his return were *The Pathfinder*, *The Destroyer*, *The Two Admirals*, and *Wing and Wing*. His more recent performances, in which he uses the novel as a vehicle for political declamation, are unworthy of his fame. Upon the whole, the best of his writings are — *The Spy*, *The Pilot*, *The Prairie*, *The Last af the Mohicans*, and *The Red Rover*. These and others are instinct with the spirit of nationality, and have vindicated the land of Cooper's birth from many current misrepresentations. — This novelist had given to the world his best creations, when **Nathaniel Hawthorne** (1804-1864) began to produce his most popular and original works — *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851), and *The Blithedale Romance* (1852). The style of these three novels is exceedingly beautiful; the author, though a prose-writer, is in spirit a poet. — Two female novelists of America, among others, have become celebrated in Europe as well as in their own country, **Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe** (born 1812), and **Elizabeth Wetherell** (born 1818). The former is the authoress of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), a book of world-wide circulation; the latter, whose real name is Susan Warner, has gained popularity by *The Wide, Wide World* (1850), *Queechy* (1852), etc.

5. — Hitherto the most substantial productions of American literature have belonged to the department of history. The excellence of historians such as Prescott, Motley, and Bancroft, will be acknowledged by the severest critic. **William Hickling Prescott** (1796-1859), though he had an eye closed for all useful purposes by an accident at Harvard College, and the other sympathetically affected, was all his life long a hard worker; his example proves, with that of our celebrated historian, Augustin Thierry, how literary enthusiasm can subdue the greatest calamity. In 1815 he visited Europe, and passed two years in England, France, and Italy, in search of a cure for his infirmity of sight—which he dit not find,—and in collecting notes on the great deeds and thoughts of the men of renown of the older days. Devoting himself to the history of Spain, he first produced the *History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella the Catholic* (1837). Encouraged by his election to membership by the Spanish Royal Academy of History, and the cordial compliments showered upon him by the most eminent representatives of letters in many climes, he resumed his labours, and in 1843 gave to the world the *History of the Conquest of Mexico*, and in 1847 the *History of the Conquest of Peru*. En 1855 he

published the first and second volumes, and in 1858 the third volume of the *History of the Reign of Philip the Second, King of Spain*; a stroke of paralysis, of which he expired, prevented him from completing this great work. — **John Lothrop Motley** (1814-1877) was Prescott's successor in investigation on Spain and the Spaniards; his predilection was for the history of the Netherlands. He began his literary career with the *Rise of the Dutch Republic* (1856), and continued it with the *History of the United Netherlands* (1860-65), and the *Life and Death of John Barneveld* (1874). Motley's style is sometimes stilted and declamatory, which renders the perusal of his works somewhat fatiguing; but these are undoubtedly the result of profound researches. — While speaking of Spain, we ought to add a few words on a book which, from the day of its appearance (1849), became at once the standard authority on its subject — the *History of Spanish Literature*, by **George Ticknor** (1791-1871). The author had preceded Longfellow, as it has been said above, in the professorship of Modern Languages at Harvard University. He had previously made a first tour to Europe and resided in Spain; after his resignation he paid a second visit to the Old Continent, with a view especially of perfecting his acquaintance

with Spanish literature. He appears in his researches almost to have exhausted existing materials, whether bibliographical or biographical, overlooking nothing and neglecting nothing. It may be said that America has been desirous to discharge the debt due to Spain, her first discoverer: the names of Irving, Prescott, and Motley, are associated with Columbus, Ferdinand, Isabella, and Philip the Second; nor will Ticknor be forgotten where Cervantes and his compeers are held in remembrance. — The last historian we have to mention, **George Bancroft** (born 1800), wrote on his own country. He produced from 1834 to 1840 his *History of the Colonization of the United States* in three volumes. The success of this work induced him to continue his researches, and he commenced the *History of the American Revolution*. From 1852 to 1874 seven volumes were published, making ten in all, devoted to the history of the United States. The work comprises the history of the great Transatlantic Republic from the first beginnings of colonization to the complete obtaining of its independence. Bancroft writes with the spirit of a statesman and with the love of a patriot. His narrative is fair and candid, and free from any attempt to awaken old animosities between his country and England.

6. — We have still to deal with a miscellaneous writer who has exercised a very considerable influence over the youths of England as well as of America, and was one of the six foreign members of our Academy of Moral and Political Sciences. **Ralph Waldo Emerson** (1803-1882) was a poet, a philosopher, and an essayist. His life was singularly quiet, being almost wholly spent at Concord, New Hampshire, with the exception of occasional visits to England. For four years (1840-1844) he was associated with **Margaret Fuller, Marchioness of Ossoli** (1810-1850) in editing the *Dial*, a magazine of literature, religion, and transcendental philosophy, and afterwards joined with **W. H. Channing** in writing the life of the lady who had been his cooperator. The power of Emerson is hard to describe, for it consists chiefly in doing that which Horace declares to be especially difficult of attainment, viz., talking common places with originality :

Difficile est proprie communia dicere...

His poems were published in 1847 ; they have not become so popular as those of Longfellow, though they are superior in depth of thought and width of view. His essays and orations partake greatly of *the nature* of prose poems, and, in fact, show still

more power of thought and illustration than what he has attempted in verse. Well known is his *Representative Men*, a course of lectures which he published after his return from a visit to England in 1848 : in this six celebrated personages, Plato, Swedenborg, Montaigne, Shakespeare, Napoleon, and Goethe, are represented as special types of qualities carried as far as to reach the ideal. His other principal works are *Man Thinking, Literary Ethics, The Method of Nature, English Traits, The Conduct of Life, Society and Solitude*, and an *Oration on the Death of President Lincoln* (1865).

Besides the names quoted here, there are not many others who really deserve mention. The literary activity of the United States has long been unequal to their extent and resources; and even in our days the best energies of their writers are engrossed by journalism and similar ephemeral pursuits. A frank recognition of the necessity of turning minds to the cultivation of letters is felt in their literature. It is to be hoped that the University of Harvard, where men such as Ticknor and Longfellow were professors, and where others such as Prescott, Motley, Bancroft, and Emerson, were educated, will continue to bring forth scholars and literati worthy of them. At the very mo-

ment we are writing, a new element of confidence in the future is arising : a Roman Catholic University is to be founded at Washington. It is anticipated that there will be no difficulty in raising the three millions of dollars (15,510,000 francs) necessary for the endowment, a Miss Caldwell, of St. Louis, having alone given 300,000 dollars for the purpose. This will assuredly not be the last temple erected by the American Mammon in honour of the Ideal and the Beautiful.

THE END.

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